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THE WORKS

OF

VICESIMUS KNOX, D.D.

WITH A

BIOGRAPHICAL PREFACE.

IN SEVEN VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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BIOGRAPHICAL PREFACE.

VICESIMUS KNOX, D. D. was born on the 8th of December, 1752, and was the only son of the Rev. Vicesimus Knox, L. L. B. a Fellow of St John's College, Oxford; afterwards a master of Merchant Taylors' School; and lastly head master of Tunbridge School. His father educated him privately at home until the age of fourteen, when, in consequence of his urgent entreaties to be placed at a public School, he entered Merchant Taylors' in a high class, under the Rev. James Townley. This gentleman possessed great urbanity, which recommended him to the friendship of Garrick. Although not a profound scholar, yet he was distinguished by a refined literary taste, which he was remarkably successful in imparting among his pupils. Dr. Knox spoke of him with gratitude, attributing, in no small degree, his own studious habits, while others of his age were wholly addicted to trifling amusements, to the flattering but judicious encouragement he received from his master. His exercises were publicly read in the school, as models of excellence.

It will be seen in his "LIBERAL EDUCATION" that he gives the preference decisively to a public education. In his own particular instance he was capable of forming most accurately the comparison. Notwithstanding the peculiar advantages he enjoyed in a course

of private education from the zealous labours of an affectionate parent, who was highly qualified for the office of a tutor, the stimulus of emulation was still wanting, and he declared that, in a very short time, he made a much greater proficiency at school. At this susceptible period of life, he had the happiness and good fortune of enjoying an intimacy with that most amiable divine and classical scholar, Dr. JORTIN, and with that eminent genius, OLIVER GOLDSMITH; the former frequently invited him to pass his holidays at his vicarage at Kensington, and, together with the latter (whom he also often visited and who took a great interest in his studies) contributed to confirm that ardent love of literature in his youthful mind, that never afterwards forsook him.

At the age of nearly nineteen, he was elected to a fellowship at the college, where his father had preceded him; and a riper and a sounder scholar, perhaps never entered within its walls. In consequence of the reputation that he immediately acquired at Oxford, especially from his Latin verses, which were not inferior to VINCENT BOURNE'S, he was selected for one of the speakers at the *Encenia*, when LORD NORTH was installed Chancellor. He remained eight years at the university; a longer residence than is now usual, but after taking his Bachelor's degree, he had devoted himself to general literature, and he there found in the numerous libraries to which he procured access, an inexhaustible source of mental gratification, which he was unwilling to relinquish. At this time he assiduously cultivated the practice of English composition, and, before he finally left Oxford, sent anonymously, as

a present to Mr. Dilly (the Bookseller) the manuscript of a sufficient number of the "ESSAYS, MORAL AND LITERARY," to make a volume, leaving it at his option to publish or destroy them, as he might be advised. DR. JOHNSON was consulted, who spoke of the style and matter in terms of the highest panegyric, and predicted the future fame of the writer. The work appeared at first in one volume; numerous impressions were speedily required, and it was soon extended to three volumes. The author was no longer concealed. His name at once burst into eminence, and the public voice placed him in the first rank of the English Classics. In no department of the Belles Lettres has any publication, excepting the SPECTATOR, been so extensively circulated. It has been translated into most of the European languages.

Upon the resignation of his father in 1778, Dr. Knox was appointed to the head mastership of Tunbridge school. He adopted this profession in opposition to the remonstrances of Dr. Dennis, the President of St. John's, and Dr. Wheeler, the learned public orator; both of whom feared, without reason, as it proved in the result, that so laborious an undertaking would injuriously interfere with the literary career he had so successfully commenced. Mrs. Montague also, who then enjoyed high celebrity, and several other eminent characters of that day, took considerable pains to persuade him to dedicate himself to the academic life at Oxford, which they represented as offering to him the most brilliant prospects; but an attachment to an accomplished, and excellent lady, the daughter of Thomas Miller, Esq. of Tunbridge, whom he subsequently married, unalterably fixed his determination.

The duties of the office in which he was engaged, necessarily directed his attention to the best modes of forming the classical scholar, and in 1781, he published his treatise, entitled "LIBERAL EDUCATION." The success of this work was not less than that of the "ESSAYS," it having long superseded all others upon this important subject. In pointing out the defects in education, he could not pass over the gross relaxation of discipline in the universities, which at that time prevailed, more especially at Oxford; nor could he, consistently with his purpose, refrain from exposing certain absurdities, that rendered the public exercises ridiculous, and defeated their objects. Whatever resentment was felt in the universities at the moment, the suggestions of the author have since been regarded; a reform has taken place in many of the objectionable particulars; and he lived to express great satisfaction at the admirable spirit of emulation among the students, which the recent statutable regulations have produced. Had his life been spared, he had intended, in a new edition, to have expunged many of those strictures, which, happily, he considered no longer applicable.

In 1787 he published a series of miscellaneous papers, under the title of "WINTER EVENINGS." A biographer in the "BRITISH ESSAYISTS," thus speaks of them. "The work entitled "WINTER EVENINGS," contains a great variety of amusement and instruction. The literary Essays will generally be found to evince a mind well stored with learning, and with learning not lying in a state of lumber, but judiciously arranged and tastefully combined. Dr. KNOX had a nice perception of the beautiful, and, like the best of the Greeks, he

united the beautiful with the good. His moral feelings were in strict union with a cultivated taste. His "WINTER EVENINGS," in almost every page, furnish ample proofs of a mind that was perpetually labouring to promote a proficiency both in literature and virtue, and to diffuse a pure and hallowed regard both for the beautiful and the good."

About this time he had the honour of receiving from Philadelphia a diploma, conferring a Doctor's degree in that university, with an unanimous expression of the high sense that learned body entertained of the services that his works, which had all been republished in America, had rendered to the cause of learning and morals. For the use of his own school, which had risen to great reputation (although it had not acquired, during his mastership, the advantage of the very opulent endowment, which, by a decree of the Court of Chancery, it now possesses) he edited HORACE, and JUVENAL upon the *expurgata* plan; and originated and superintended those well-known and useful compilations, "ELEGANT EXTRACTS," in prose and verse; "ELEGANT EPISTLES;" "FAMILY LECTURES," &c. The prefaces to which were written by himself.

In 1793 appeared "PERSONAL NOBILITY," in one volume, "containing advice to a young nobleman, in a series of letters, on the conduct of his studies, and the best means of maintaining the dignity of the peerage." The abolition of nobility in France had taken place at this period, and given a particular interest to the subject of this work, which is written in a glowing strain of eloquence, and is not less replete with judicious precepts than constitutional opinions. It was in this year, that he preached

his celebrated sermon at Brighton. He had long been deeply impressed with the folly and wickedness of war. The subject of this sermon was the "*Unlawfulness of offensive War.*" Some subaltern militia officers, hoping to recommend themselves to notice, under the pretence of reprobating the doctrines inculcated in this discourse, disgraced themselves by making a riot at the theatre to which, a few evenings afterwards, he had accompanied his family, and compelling him, together with his wife and young children, to quit it. Dr. Knox treated this unmanly aggression with contempt, and abstained from any legal proceedings, contenting himself with publishing in his own vindication the strongest passages of the sermon, the whole of which is here printed. He shortly afterwards followed up this subject by giving a translation of the tract of Erasmus, entitled, "*Bellum dulce inexpertis.*" This translation he called "ANTIPOLEMUS."

At the beginning of 1795 he wrote "THE SPIRIT OF DESPOTISM." He composed this treatise under a conviction that the continental confederacy to crush the rising liberties of France, was directed against the best interests of mankind; and that it received its principal support from England. This he attributed to the influence of that pernicious spirit that he has described under the appellation of the Spirit of Despotism, and which he thought was encouraged by the writings of Mr. Burke. Shortly after the work was finished the war assumed altogether a new character, and the French in their turn became the aggressors; in the name of Liberty seeking military glory, destroying the independence of neighbouring nations, and under-

mining all the foundations of freedom. He determined, therefore, to postpone the publication until a more favourable opportunity, which, from the course of political events did not occur during his life. Indeed, during his latter years, theology became his principal concern. It happened, however, that a copy of this work escaped the custody to which it was confided, and, without his knowledge, was published. The writer already quoted thus expresses himself upon the subject of it. "No one can doubt, but that the love of liberty in the bosom of Dr. Knox was not merely a transient feeling but a permanent principle, for he cherished it at the expence of great worldly interests. The work entitled "The Spirit of Despotism," which was not till lately generally known to be his production, evinces a higher tone of thought, more fire of sentiment, and more force of expression, than will readily be found in his other works. Indeed, a calmer style was more suited to Essays on literary or miscellaneous topics. No work is better calculated than the "Spirit of Despotism," to unfold the deformities and to excite a detestation of arbitrary power."

The "SERMONS UPON FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY," in one volume 8vo. were published about this period, and were followed by "CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY," in two volumes, which was intended by the author chiefly as an antidote to the doctrines of those who call themselves, by way of eminence, "*Rational Christians*," and who, neglecting the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, insinuate that moral duties constitute the whole of it. Shortly afterwards appeared "CONSIDERATIONS ON THE NATURE AND EFFICACY OF THE LORD'S SUPPER;" the principal ob-

ject of which was to assert the important truth, " that benefits are annexed to the reception of the Eucharist," in opposition to Bishops Hoadley and Pearce ; Drs. Sykes, Balguy, and Bell. That eminent theologian, BISHOP HORSELEY, with a liberality that did him honour, as his politics were known to be at variance with the author's, publicly eulogized this treatise in the charges delivered to his clergy, recommending it to their particular perusal; and he made it the occasion of soliciting the friendship of the writer, which continued till the Bishop's death.

The reputation that Dr. Knox had acquired in the Belles Lettres was fully sustained by his works in theology. They display an elevated tone of piety, his usual polished style, and most learnedly enforce doctrines of the soundest divinity. It was his singular fate to give offence to those sects in religion, which differ widely from each other, the Unitarians and the Methodists. Dr. Disney (of the Essex-Street Chapel) published a series of letters addressed to him upon his opinions expressed in his sermons ; and the Methodists, although he vindicated some of their tenets from misrepresentation, sorely felt his animadversions upon the mischiefs occasioned by their extravagance and fanaticism.

Dr. Knox left Tunbridge in 1812, and retired to London, where he purchased the beautiful residence of Owen Williams, Esq. M. P. upon the Adelphi Terrace. He was rector of Runwell and Ramsden Crays in Essex (of which parishes he was the patron), and minister of the parochial chapelry of Shipbourn in Kent, where he performed the duty, for nearly forty

years, with exemplaryregularity. After his retirement, while he lived in London, the situation of his benefices not permitting him to live on them, he never withheld his powerful aid from the pulpit, whenever it was solicited in favour of the various charities with which the metropolis abounds. There are few of those institutions which have not benefitted by his exertions. During this period he preached at Bedford Chapel, Bloomsbury, the very eloquent and persuasive sermon that is included in the sixth volume "upon the duty and advantage of educating the poor." A few other single sermons that he printed are contained in that volume. In one of them, which he preached at the opening of the chapel of the Philanthropic Society, in St. George's Fields, he first called the public attention to the necessity of encreasing the number of the places of worship on the establishment. As a preacher, he will long be remembered; his voice was powerful and melodious; his matter was always excellent, and his manner possessed a dignity, propriety, and impressiveness that rivetted the attention of the most crowded congregations.

In the last year of his life he published a pamphlet against the "DEGRADATION OF GRAMMAR SCHOOLS." A bill was then pending in parliament for the general education of the poor; among its provisions was one, which would have had the effect of lowering the education now afforded in the ancient grammar schools, by giving instruction in writing, reading, and arithmetic, under the same roof, as a co-ordinate part of the foundation, to an humbler class of scholars out of the funds exclusively appropriated by the donors to the learned

languages. The bill was withdrawn. It afforded however, a subject for a splendid defence of classical education. The arguments of Milton, Locke, Bacon, and others, who recommend the teaching boys *things*, in preference to the classics, are successfully combated.

His politics were founded on philanthropy. To preserve peace and secure liberty he deemed the first object of government, considering that all other public benefits necessarily follow in their train. He thought the whig doctrines, as asserted at the revolution, consulted the happiness of the human race, in preference to the particular interests of certain privileged classes and individuals. He was a whig, therefore, upon principle. His steadiness and consistency were remarkable. Holding time-serving in abhorrence, he scorned any concealment of his political opinions however disadvantageous to his own private interests might be the avowal. It will hereafter excite surprise, that one to whom the public owed such important obligations should have derived no benefit from the public patronage; but the ascendency of the Tory party during his life, excepting a few brief intervals, will account for his exclusion from ministerial favour. In one of those intervals, shortly after the formation of the ministry of Mr. Fox, in 1806, he received an intimation from him, that he was designed for promotion to one of the highest stations in the church. Unhappily, for the best interests of the establishment, this intention was frustrated by the death of that enlightened statesman, (followed shortly by the dissolution of the administration) before the opportunity occurred of carrying it into effect.

This circumstance, on his own account, occasioned in his breast no regrets; for preferment was never his object, nor occupied his thoughts. He was, from conscientious conviction, a firm friend of the Church of England, but, at the same time, an advocate of a liberal toleration. Entertaining much respect for the private character of Bishop Dampier, he felt it his duty to protest against an address which that bishop produced, with more zeal than discretion, at the *altar*, for the signature of the clergy assembled at a visitation of his diocese, thanking the Crown for requiring a pledge from administration, that they would never again agitate the Catholic question. He was aware that differences of opinion might conscientiously be entertained upon this subject, but thought, with the excellent Bishop Bathurst, that, with proper securities, it was no less contrary to sound policy and justice, than to the benign spirit of the gospel, to impose civil disabilities upon so many of the Christian subjects of the united kingdom, merely because they remained faithful to the religion of their forefathers.

Dr. Knox possessed extraordinary facility in composition of every kind. He wrote and spoke Latin with the most classical purity. He was singularly felicitous in epigrammatic point, and a very eminent Greek scholar. He was a great student of the harmony of language, invariably forming his sentences with a regard to rhythmical proportion. A critic, in a publication of known adverse political sentiments, in estimating his character as a writer, thus expresses himself—"With learning, taste, and ingenuity, Dr. Knox confessedly unites the warmest benevolence and most unaffected piety. We have been charmed with

the elegance of his diction and the harmony of his periods; nor have we been less delighted with his refined sentiment and spirited expression; and whilst we have admired the vividness, we have approved the justness of his conceptions. While our fancy has caught fire from his animated declamation, our cooler judgment has, for the most part, acquiesced in his decisions."

The amiable sentiments which abound in all his works pourtray with fidelity the qualities that adorned his private character. He possessed the acutest sensibility, and his heart was exquisitely susceptible of all the charities of domestic life. His habits were unobtrusive and retired, and his whole demeanour in society was marked by a diffidence inseparable from his nature.

The writer last cited also observes, in the same article, "In the progress of his publications we have been repeatedly gratified by that ingenuousness which, always open to conviction, acknowledges and corrects error with gracefulness. In the "Essays, moral and literary," there occurred some exceptionable opinions, which the amiable author, on the suggestion of his critics, very readily retracted; and in several of his other works we have observed improvements in points which vanity or fastidiousness would not have reconsidered or retouched."

It has been remarked by one of his biographers, that he did not display the extraordinary fertility of mind in conversation which distinguishes his writings.—This observation might reasonably be made by one who

knew him only in the latter years of his life; not that there was any decay of his faculties, as is evident from his powerful pamphlet on Classical Learning, written a few months only before his death; but from a succession of domestic calamities, he suffered greatly from mental depression, which, unfortunately, attacked him with particular violence in company, and was the cause of his silence. At no distant intervals he had to deplore the loss of a son in the flower of his age; of his own wife; and of an only daughter, the wife of R. C. Sconce, Esq. Before these grievous afflictions his conversation was distinguished as much by the riches of his well-stored mind, as by the native vigour of his intellect, set off by a delightful fervour of expression, and often relieved by a most agreeable playfulness.

Dr. Knox enjoyed remarkably good health, the consequence of an excellent constitution, as well as of regular habits. He was always an early riser. His reading was almost universal, comprehending all the best authors in the living as well as dead languages. He was enabled to follow his literary pursuits with unabated ardour till within the last three days of his life. The strength of his constitution seemed to promise an extreme old age, when he was seized with an inflammation of the intestines, while on a visit at his son's house at Tunbridge, which terminated his life on the 6th of September, 1821, in the sixty-ninth year of his age. So little foreseen was this melancholy event, that he was under an engagement to preach a sermon at Limehouse, a few days after it happened, for the benefit of the national schools. The clergyman who

officiated on the occasion, noticed his decease in the following appropriate language.

"I have now concluded my observations on this important subject. It was to have been recommended to your attention by a preacher of consummate ability, whose name stands high on the records of literature, and whose life was one continued course of ardent benevolence, and usefulness to his fellow-creatures. The place now filled by his unworthy substitute on this occasion, he had for a considerable time before his departure from this life, and while totally unconscious of the arrow which flieth in darkness, consented to occupy. But that Almighty Providence to whose decrees all things in Heaven and earth do bow and obey, thought proper, after a brief warning, to remove him from this state of existence to that reward, as we have reason to hope, which is reserved for those who have walked humbly and piously with their God, and enjoyed an unwearied delight in advancing the moral and intellectual happiness of their species. To him who has been appointed to supply the place of so eminent a pleader in the cause of Charity much indulgence is therefore necessary."

His funeral took place at Tunbridge, on which occasion the inhabitants of that town and neighbourhood spontaneously assembled in a very numerous body to offer a reverential tribute of regret. His family who survive him are, his sons, Mr. Knox, the barrister, and the Rev. Dr. Knox, the present head master of Tunbridge School; and two sisters married to John Vade, and William Child, Esqrs. of London.

A monument has been erected in the chancel of Tunbridge Church with this inscription :

TO THE MEMORY OF

VICESIMUS KNOX, D.D.

MASTER OF TUNBRIDGE SCHOOL, AND RECTOR OF RUNWELL AND RAMSDEN CRAYS IN ESSEX.

BORN DEC. 8, 1752.—DIED, SEPT. 6, 1821.

A SOUND DIVINE,
AN ELEGANT AND PROFOUND SCHOLAR,
A POLISHED AND POWERFUL WRITER,
AN ELOQUENT, ZEALOUS, AND PERSUASIVE PREACHER OF THE GOSPEL,
HE EMPLOYED HIS HIGH ENDOWMENTS
TO THE GLORY OF GOD,
AND THE MORAL AND INTELLECTUAL IMPROVEMENT OF MAN.
ANXIOUS EVER TO ADVANCE THE HAPPINESS OF HIS FELLOW-CREATURES,
UPON THE PUREST PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN PHILANTHROPY,
WITH A LOFTY SPIRIT OF INDEPENDENCE,
AND A RARE DISINTERESTEDNESS IN CONDUCT,
HE DISREGARDED THE ORDINARY OBJECTS OF WORLDLY AMBITION,
AND SHEWED HIMSELF ON ALL OCCASIONS
THE ENEMY OF PUBLIC ABUSES,
THE FRIEND OF CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY,
THE OPPONENT OF OFFENSIVE WAR,
THE PROMOTER OF PEACE,
AND THE ADVOCATE OF ALL THE CLAIMS OF HUMANITY.

" HE BEING DEAD YET SPEAKETH."

ESSAYS,

MORAL AND LITERARY.

No. I.

ON ESSAY WRITING.

THOSE sages of antiquity, who, from their improvements in knowledge and virtue, had the least dubious claim to the appellation of wise men, were yet too modest to assume a name which had the appearance of ostentation, and rather chose to be called Philosophers, or Lovers of Wisdom. From similar motives, many of the Moderns, who have written with great skill on subjects of morality and science, have entitled their productions, Essays; a name which, though it may now convey the idea of regular treatises and dissertations, is synonymous with the word Attempts, and means no more than humble endeavours to instruct or to amuse. A writer who, at a late period, pursuing the track of those celebrated authors who preceded him, boldly promises improvement on his predecessors, is received with that indignation which arrogance, even when supported by some degree of merit, naturally excites; but he who professes only an attempt, however unsuccessful, has a claim to candour and indulgence. Failure has ceased to be ridiculous where presumption has not made pretensions, nor confidence anticipated success.

Many works, therefore, distinguished by this unassuming title, have been well received, and have obtained a very exalted place in the scale of literary honours. None have become more popular in their own country than those periodical papers which were published by the Tatler, the Guardian, and the Spectator, and which have been successfully imitated by later writers. The taste and morals of the nation have been more generally improved by these excellent, though short and detached, compositions, than by long and elaborate systems of morality. They were addressed to the heart and imagination, and fitted for the haunts of men engaged in the employments of common life; while scientific treatises of ethics were calculated only for the exercise of scholastic disputation; and their influence on the conduct of life, if they ever possessed any, was circumscribed within narrow limits. Addison, like Socrates, to whom he has often been compared, brought down knowledge from those heights which were accessible only to professed scholars, and placed it within the reach of all, who to natural and common sense added the advantage of a common education. He it was who divested Philosophy of that unbecoming garb in which she had been disguised by her mistaken followers, and repre ented her attired by the Graces, like the Goddess of Beauty.

The votaries of the severer muses have sometimes ventured to despise this entertaining species of productions, as futile and superficial. They have asserted that Truth needs not embellishment, and that the ornaments which she borrows from imagination are no less unbecoming than unnecessary. But the real utility of literary labours is to be estimated by the extent of their influence on the national manners and understanding. Truth, however, when delivered with that systematic precision which is approved in the schools of philoso-

phy, will not have charms enough to detain the common reader, who takes up a book for the amusement of a leisure hour, and who must be tempted to admit instruction by the prospect of receiving pleasure. In every thousand of those who have been delighted with the papers of Addison, perhaps not more than one has seen the Principia of Newton. Praises adequate to the merits of so exalted a genius as was his who discovered the true system of the universe, can scarcely be bestowed; nor is it detraction from his fame to assert, that, since his theories require a painful attention to comprehend them, they will not generally be attended to in a commercial country like our own, where only the short interval, which the pursuit of gain and the practice of mechanic arts affords, will be devoted to letters by the more numerous classes of the community. And indeed it must be confessed, that though the abstruser doctrines of philosophy may be highly interesting to the man of science, and may qualify him for a professor's chair, or a seat at the board of longitude, yet they seem not to have any tendency to render him better in his civil and social relations. I never could find that the Elements of Euclid taught any one to be a better father, husband, son, or citizen. Mathematical truth is, indeed, a most beautiful object of contemplation; but moral truth is better calculated to excite and reward the attention of the busy world.

Our great countryman Bacon, who pointed out the path to those sublime heights in philosophy at which his followers have arrived, would never have brought his speculations home to men's business and bosoms, to use his own mode of expression, if he had not written his Essays; a work, which, as it was of the most extensive utility, and most easily understood, became the most popular of all his productions. The remarks contained in it are such as show that he had an intimate

knowledge of the human heart, and they have a direct tendency to guide mankind in the conduct of life. They are the institutes of a science which all wish to learn; but how few, in comparison, are interested in the *Novum Organum?* Whether a man adopt the hypothetical or experimental philosophy, is matter of indifference to his moral conduct; nor is a Cartesian of necessity better or worse than the admirer of the more modern and more probable system. An error in physical speculations is seldom productive of such consequences, either to one's neighbour or one's self, as are deeply, durably, or extensively injurious.

Bacon, it is true, discovered new tracts of learning; he gave directions to pursue them; he banished hypothesis, and introduced experiment; he is deservedly the glory of our nation, as the restorer of true philosophy; but yet, without detracting from his merits, we may express our regret that he did not bestow more time and pains on the grand science of human nature. He appears, from the specimens he has left us, to have been better qualified to advance it to perfection than any modern. The example, however, of so profound a writer is sufficient to vindicate from the charge of futility those little compositions which, without the formality of studied treatises, aim at instructing the reader in the truths of ethics, of criticism, and in all the more agreeable subjects of popular philosophy.

In an age when books and a competent education are easily attainable, all ranks will be found to devote a considerable portion of their unemployed time to some kind of reading. But what shall they read during the interval of half an hour; interrupted, perhaps, by the prattle of children, or the interruptions of visitors, or the avocations of business? Not a long and tedious treatise, divided and subdivided, and requiring the unsuspended attention of a day to comprehend a part of

it. They seek relaxation, but in this they find a task; irksome, because it requires close application; and unimproving to them, because their application can only be desultory. But hard, indeed, must be his lot, who, in the most active and most dissipated scenes of life, cannot bestow the small space of time required in the perusal of an essay of a few pages. He who possesses systematic books of morality will not easily find better guides, except in religious books, but yet he will oftener be tempted to take from his shelves a volume of the Spectator. He who has never thought of reading the tedious though instructive conferences of Arrian, has perhaps committed to memory the Enchiridion or Manual of Epictetus. Even the form, the size, the weight of a volume, are circumstances which deserve to be attended to in a subordinate degree, since they may contribute to render its circulation and influence more diffusive. What delicate student in the circles of fashion could bear to carry a folio with him in his chariot; or recline on a sofa, in the hour of elegant ease, with a heavy quarto in his hand?

It must not, however, be supposed, that this kind of works is adapted only to the superficial reader. Many subjects of morality and learning have been concisely discussed in a few pages, with a depth, solidity, and originality of thought, rarely exceeded in any formal dissertation. The works of our English divines, the best moralists in the world, have sometimes lost their effect by their prolixity; for the mind of man, though comprehensive to a very great degree, is yet circumscribed at last within certain bounds, and, like a full vessel, suffers all that is superfluous to run to waste. But the concise periodical Essay satisfies the subject without fatiguing the attention, or overburthening the memory.

The detached nature of these writings enables the

writer to vary his style without impropriety; to be grave or gay, humorous or severe; to lay down positive rules, or to teach by example; to speak in his own person, or to introduce an instructive tale. Every volume contains a variety of subjects treated in various manners, and suited to the dispositions of different readers, or of the same reader at different times. Thus is idleness rendered attentive, and the listless moments of leisure improved with the advantages of study, unmixed with the toil of formal application. The saunterer is deceived into employment, and the vicious, the dissipated, the busy, are insensibly allured to the indulgence of literary and philosophical contemplation.

Thus extensively useful and entertaining, it is by no means wonderful that Essays have been more universally read in the busy walks of life than any other productions. Their detached pages have been scattered in the world, "thick as autumnal leaves in Vallambrosa." Many of them have perished as soon as the leaves which they resembled. But the names and works of Montaigne, of Bacon, of Temple, of Collier, of Addison, of Steele, and of their successful followers, are held in a high degree of esteem, which neither the lapse of time nor the caprice of fashion have been able to depreciate.

There is scarcely an individual, not only of those who profess learning, but of those who devote any of their time to reading, who has not perused the papers of the Spectator. Placed, however, in our hands in the earliest period of life, they have lost, in the eyes of many readers, the charm of novelty. To these, perhaps, new Attempts, or Essays, similar at least in kind, may afford entertainment; nor should they be checked as presumptuous, since, without the spirit of adventure, modern literature would become either stationary or retrograde. The fame of those writers, however great,

is but adequate to their merits. It is true that they have presented us with much fine gold; yet the mine is still rich, and will never be exhausted.

From the various combination of human passions, originally few in number, an infinite variety of moral appearances is found to arise. Political revolutions, religious reformations, the whims of fashion, and the vicissitudes of taste and literature, enable the moral writer, when he travels even in the beaten road of an Essayist, to discover prospects hitherto unobserved, or not completely described.

The metropolis of a great empire, flourishing in arts and commerce, is, as it were, the hot-bed of manners, in which every plant shoots up with forced luxuriance. In a harvest so plentiful, not only those who first apply the sickle are rewarded with abundance, but many a loaded sheaf remains to be picked up by the careful gleaner. And, happily for the morals and amusements, as well as understandings, of our nation, the labourers in it have been neither few nor unsuccessful.

The present age has been called an age of literary luxury; nor let it blush at the appellation. The love of letters is attended with the sweetest satisfactions; and the indulgence of it tends to silence the importunity of many other propensities, which, as they are less innocent, can seldom be gratified without consequent misery.

No. II.

ON ENTRANCE INTO LIFE, AND THE CONDUCT OF EARLY MANHOOD.

THERE seems to be a peculiar propriety in addressing moral precepts to the rising generation. Besides that, like travellers entering on a journey, they want direction, there are circumstances which render it probable that

instruction will be more efficacious in youth than at a maturer period. Long habits of business or pleasure, and an indiscriminate intercourse with mankind, often superinduce a great degree of insensibility; and the battered veteran at last considers the admonitions of the moralist as the vain babbling of a sophist, and the declamation of a school-boy. The keen edge of moral perception is blunted by long and reiterated collision; and to him who has lost the finer sensibilities, it is no less fruitless to address a moral discourse than to represent to the deaf the charms of melody, or to the blind the beauties of a picture.

But youth possesses sensibility in perfection; and, unless education has been totally neglected, or erroneously pursued, its habits are usually virtuous. Innocence leaves the mind at liberty, in early youth, to soar after every thing which is generous, noble, or sublime, in morals and intellectuals. Furnished with a natural susceptibility, and free from any acquired impediment, the mind is then in the most favourable state for the admission of instruction, and for learning how to live.

I will, then, suppose a young man present who has passed through the forms of a liberal education at school, and who is just entering on the stage of life, to act his part according to his own judgment. I will address him with all the affection and sincerity of a parent, in the following manner:

"You have violent passions implanted in you by Nature for the accomplishment of her purposes; but conclude not, as many have done to their ruin, that because they are violent, they are irresistible. The same Nature which gave you passions, gave you also reason, and a love of order. Religion, added to the light of Nature and the experience of mankind, has concurred in establishing it as an unquestionable truth, that the

irregular or intemperate indulgence of the passions is always attended with pain, in some mode or other, which greatly exceeds its pleasure.

" Your passions will be easily restrained from enormous excess, if you really wish and honestly endeavour to restrain them. But the greater part of young men study to inflame their fury, and give them a degree of force which they possess not in a state of nature. They run into temptation, and desire not to be delivered from evil. They knowingly and willingly sacrifice to momentary gratifications the comfort of all which should sweeten the remainder of life. Begin, then, with most sincerely wishing to conquer those subtle and powerful enemies whom you carry in your bosom. Pray for Divine assistance. Avoid solitude the first moment a loose thought insinuates itself, and hasten to the company of those whom you respect. Converse not on subjects which lead to impure ideas. Have courage to decline reading immoral books, even when they fall into your hands. If, at a proper age, you form a strong attachment to a virtuous woman, dare, with the sanction of parental approbation, to marry. It is better to be poor than wicked. Cherish the object of your early love. Be industrious, and trust in Providence.

" Thus shall you avoid the perpetual torments of unruly affection, the most loathsome of diseases, and the thousand penalties of selfish celibacy. Thus shall you please God and your own heart, if it is a good one; and displease none but an ill-judging and wicked world and perhaps a few of your covetous relations, whom avarice may have rendered insensible to any charms but those of sordid lucre.

" But really you have not so much to fear from the violence of the concupiscible affections, when unassisted by voluntary compliance, as from vanity. The perverse ambition of arriving at the character of a man of

spirit by vicious audacity has of late universally prevailed, and has ruined a great part of the rising generation. I have known many young men proud of the impurest distempers, and boasting of misfortunes which are attended with the greatest pain and misery, and ought to be accompanied with shame. Far more have taken pains to shine, amidst the little circle of their vicious acquaintance, in the character of gay libertines, than to acquire, by useful qualities, the esteem of the good. From motives of vanity, health and peace are sacrificed, fortunes lavished without credit or enjoyment, every relative and personal duty neglected, and religion boldly set at defiance. To be admitted into the company of those who disgrace the family title which they inherit, thousands plunge into debauchery without passion, into drunkenness without convivial enjoyment, into gaming without the means or inclination for play. Old age rapidly advances. When vanity at length retreats from insult and from mortification, avarice succeeds; and meanness, and disease, and disgrace, and poverty, and discontent, and despair, diffuse clouds and darkness over the evening of life. Such is the lot of those who glory in their shame, and are ashamed of their glory.

"Have sense and resolution enough, therefore, to give up all pretensions to those titles, of a fine fellow, a rake, or whatever vulgar name the temporary cant of the vicious bestows on the distinguished libertine. Preserve your principles, and be steady in your conduct. And though your exemplary behaviour may bring upon you the insulting and ironical appellation of a saint, a puritan, or even a methodist, persevere in rectitude. It will be in your power soon not indeed to insult, but to pity. Have spirit, and display it. But let it be that sort of spirit which urges you to proceed in the path in which you were placed by the faithful

guide of your infancy. Exhibit a noble superiority in daring to disregard the artful and malicious reproaches of the vain and vicious, who labour to make you a convert to folly, in order to keep them in countenance. They will laugh at first, but esteem you in their hearts even while they laugh, and in the end revere your virtue.

"Let that generous courage which conscious rectitude inspires enable you to despise and neglect the assaults of ridicule. When all other modes of attack have failed, ridicule has succeeded. The bulwark of virtue, which stood firmly against the weapons of argument, has tottered on its basis, or fallen to the ground, touched by the wand of magic ridicule. In the school, in the college, in the world at large, it is the powerful engine which is used to level an exalted character. You will infallibly be attacked with it, if you are in any respects singular; and singular in many respects you must be, if you are eminently virtuous.

"Love truth, and dare to speak it at all events. The man of the world will tell you, you must dissemble; and so you must, if your objects and pursuits are like his, mean and selfish. But your purposes are generous; and your methods of obtaining them are therefore undisguised. You mean well. Avow your meaning, if honour requires the avowal, and fear nothing. You will, indeed, do right to wish to please; but you will be anxious to please the worthy only, and none but worthy actions will effect that purpose. With respect to that *art of pleasing* which requires the sacrifice of your sincerity, despise it, as the base quality of flatterers, sycophants, cheats, and scoundrels. An habitual liar, besides that he will be known and marked with infamy, must possess a poor and pusillanimous heart; for lying originates in cowardice. It originates also in fraud; and a liar, whatever may be his station, would

certainly, if he were sure of secrecy, be a thief. Sorry am I to say, that this habit is very common in the world, even among those who make a figure in the realms of dissipation; those whose *honour* would compel them to stab you to the heart, if you were to tell them plainly the mortifying truth, that you convict them of a lie.

" With all your good qualities unite the humility of a Christian. Be not morose. Be cautious of overvaluing yourself. Make allowances for the vices and errors which you will daily see. Remember that all have not had the benefit of moral instruction; that a great part of mankind are in effect orphans turned loose into the wide world, without one faithful friend to give them advice; left to find their own way in a dark and rugged wilderness, with snares, and quicksands, and chasms around them. Be candid, therefore, and, among all the improvements of education and refinements of manners, let the beautiful Christian graces of Meekness and Benevolence shine most conspicuous. Relieve distress, prevent mischief, and do good, wherever you can; but be neither ostentatious nor censorious.

" Be cheerful, and gratefully enjoy the good which Providence has bestowed upon you. But be moderate. Moderation is the law of enjoyment. All beyond is nominal pleasure and real pain.

" I will not multiply my precepts. Choose good books, and follow their direction. Adopt religious, virtuous, manly principles. Fix them deeply in your bosom, and let them go with you unloosened and unaltered to the grave.

" If you follow such advice as, from the pure motive of serving you most essentially, I have given you, I will not, indeed, promise that you shall not be unfortunate, according to the common idea of the word; but I will

confidently assure you that you shall not be unhappy. I will not promise you worldly success, but I will engage that you shall deserve it, and shall know how to bear its absence."

No. III.

CLASSICAL LEARNING VINDICATED.

A FEW men of wit, who, in a long intercourse with the fashionable world, had probably forgotten that little knowledge of the ancient languages and authors which they had acquired at school, have endeavoured to bring into discredit the prevailing mode of education, which devotes much time to the study of Grecian and Roman literature. Possessed of natural parts, they have perhaps, besides, enjoyed all those advantages of good company and extensive commerce with the living world, which both excite, and give occasion to display, great abilities. They became, therefore, distinguished characters in their time, though their attainments in learning were few, and their real knowledge greatly defective. But, whatever figure they made, they would have shone with still greater lustre, if they had retained a tincture of that elegance and liberality of sentiment which the mind acquires by a study of the classics, and the cultivation of a pure taste, which contributes more to form the true Gentleman, than the substituted ornaments of external grace.

The example of these illustrious but superficial personages has induced every prater who has been taught to lisp broken French, and dance a minuet, to laugh at the lubberly boy, as he calls him, who spends a dozen years at school in learning Greek and Latin. He unfairly represents this time as spent in acquiring the languages alone; ignorant that a taste is often formed in it for those authors who communicate the knowledge of things as well as of words, and who both open the

sources of science, and furnish the most elegant pleasures during the remainder of life.

The pert vivacity of assured ignorance has often persuaded the fond mother to discard the tutor for the dancing-master; to be more solicitous that the hopes of the family, the heir, perhaps, to a title, an estate, and even a share of legislation, should be taught to hold up his head, than have it furnished with those ideas and sentiments which would render him truly happy in himself, and an honour and advantage to his friends and to his country.

Even among those who are fully sensible of the necessity of improving the beauties of the mind as well as the graces of the person, there prevails a predilection for the modern languages and modern literature to the exclusion of the ancient. In the idea of these, a sufficient stock of historical knowledge is to be gained by an attention to the events of the last two or three centuries; and a sufficient acquaintance with philosophy and polite learning from a perusal of the writers of France and Italy. Collections of letters and state-papers, and the epigrammatic narratives of the Historian of Ferney, are to supply the place of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Livy. Ariosto, Tasso, and Boileau, are to be read in preference to Homer, Virgil, and Horace; and the works of Voltaire alone to be substituted in the place of all the poetry, all the philosophy, and all the history, that has ever been written. In consequence of these mistaken notions, our great grammar-schools, which have produced so many ornaments of human nature, are exploded, by the frivolous and insolent, as the seats of illiberal manners, of antiquated learning, and, in a word, of *pedantry*.

With respect to the charge that illiberal manners are the disgraceful characteristic of boys educated in grammar-schools, I must confess I am pleased with the

natural simplicity of that age of sprightliness and inexperience; nor do I know a sight more truly ridiculous than that of a boy of fourteen affecting the Graces, and behaving among his superiors in age and attainments with all the disgusting ease of self-sufficiency. The same natural good sense which makes the boy act in character, will teach the man a manly behaviour. And I believe every judicious person had rather see his son, while very young, partaking in the noisy mirth of his school-fellows, than bowing and grinning in the insipid circle of illiterate fashion.

With respect to the other charge, that a learned education is in little request in some polite circles, we confess and lament that it is true. But though we allow Fashion to dictate without control the exact shape and dimensions of a hat, a neckcloth, or a coat, yet a regard for the honour and happiness of human nature induces us to dispute her sovereign authority in those things on which depend the manners and sentiments of a rising generation.

If, however, it is granted, that the true gentleman, that is, the man of enlarged notions and polished taste, cannot, by any method of education, be so well formed as by the classical, yet it by no means follows that those whose happiness must, in a great measure, depend on less comprehensive views of men and things should be instructed in the same mode. The time that is usually spent in Lilly's Grammar, and in acquiring just so much knowledge of the Latin language as may inspire a young man with self-conceit, but cannot enable him to enter into the spirit of an author, is certainly ill bestowed. He who is designed for a vulgar walk of life had much better be reading Wingate's Arithmetic than Pindar and Horace, and learning the Rule of Three than the Rules of Syntax.

The mistakes of well-meaning ignorance are to be

pitied and excused. But how shall we apologize for those who move in a higher sphere, and who cannot but know that the greatest men our nation has produced, whether greatness is estimated by power, wealth, title, knowledge, or virtue, have laid the foundation of their eminence in our grammar-schools, where little else was taught but classical learning? How shall we apologize for these, when they slight a mode of education, which the experience of ages has proved to be efficacious, and adopt a new one, which, from its superficial nature, cannot form the man of dignity, or of just taste? Would a Sir Thomas More, for instance, a Sidney, a Raleigh, a Milton, a Temple, with others too numerous to name, have attained to that perfection of character at which they aspired and arrived, if they had been educated in the superficial modes of Rousseau?

Some leading authors seem to have wished that all our literary inquiries should be limited to that period which they are pleased to distinguish by calling it the age of Lewis XIV. It is, indeed, a shining interval in the revolutions of time; but most of the great characters that appeared in it, were formed on the models of a better age, the age of Augustus, or of Pericles. And I know not whether the reign of our Elizabeth, whatever may be thought of her own character, might not exhibit examples of probity and learning, valour, and patriotism, fitter for the imitation of an Englishman than those of any epoch in the annals of our rival nation.

While, however, we reprobate the idea of confining attention to the writings and transactions of the last three hundred years, it must be confessed that this period deserves particular regard. The inventions of the compass, of printing, of gunpowder, and a consequent spirit of enterprise, have rendered modern times interesting in a high degree. During this period, the

French nation, to use their own idea, have been remarkably awakened; nor will any man of letters, with just pretensions to taste, rest satisfied without reading the works of Fenelon, of Boileau, and of many other French authors, who have written in the true spirit of the ancients. He will, after all, acknowledge that they are but imitations of those originals, which are no less open to him than they were to them; and will confess it to be a want of spirit to drink at the distant stream when he has access to the fountain. If we can be contented with imitations, we have excellent ones in the works of Pope and Addison. But what sculptor would be satisfied with examining the plaster bust, who was at liberty to study in the Florentine gallery?

There is certainly something in the character of an Englishman analogous to the disposition of an old Roman. He has a natural generosity and love of independence. He has also a gravity of temper better adapted to mental and moral improvement than any other; because more capable of fixed attention. French vivacity is foreign to his nature; fashion, indeed, makes him sometimes adopt it; but it sits awkwardly on him, lessens his inward consciousness of dignity, and lowers him no less in the estimation of others. The ideas of a Roman are congenial to him. His mind, when cultivated by classical instruction, shoots up to maturity with the vigour of an indigenous plant; but thrives slowly, like the exotic, when nurtured only by the slender supplies of modern languages and philosophy.

The polish of external grace may, indeed, be deferred till the approach of manhood. When solidity is obtained by pursuing the modes prescribed by our forefathers, then may the file be used. The firm substance will bear attrition, and the lustre then acquired will be durable. A sensible father, who is not

himself a convert to the effeminacy of the times, had rather see a son forming himself as a scholar and a man, on the example of an old Roman or Athenian, than imitating, in his writings and actions, the undignified vivacity of nations which have been taught by their philosophy to degrade human nature.

Surely no one will deny that the two principal objects in a well-conducted education are to cultivate a good heart, and to give the understanding such additional strength and information as may safely direct the heart in the various events of life, and teach the possessor of it to act up to the comparative dignity of a rational creature... But attainments merely ornamental, and those of a mere modern linguist, have little tendency to accomplish either of these purposes. On the contrary, as they add a lustre without solidity, they induce idleness to content itself with the appearances of merit, which are easily assumed, and to neglect the reality as attainable only by a painful and unostentatious application. They inspire confidence without worth to support it; they give an air of insolent superiority which often defeats even the purpose of pleasing; and, however they may cause admiration in the dissipated and superficial, they are little esteemed by those whose applause is valuable; men of approved virtue and profound reflection. They are, then, only useful and truly graceful, when they tend to render good characters more conspicuously amiable.

No. IV.

ON THE WISDOM OF AIMING AT PERFECTION.

THE infirmity of human nature is a topic on which the profligate love to enlarge. They are apt to deduce an argument from it no less injurious than fallacious. They infer from the concession that man is naturally weak and corrupt, that the precepts of strict morality

are utterly useless, and that they originate in one of the principal arguments of human imbecility,—an ill-grounded pride.

Man is, indeed, a weak creature; but he is also an improveable creature. He has strong passions but he has also strong powers with him to counteract their operation. He possesses reason; and his happiness certainly depends upon the involuntary use or abuse, the neglect or the exertion, of this noble faculty.

It seems probable that many who urge the inefficacy of philosophical and moral precepts are only endeavouring to excuse their own indolence. They who feel themselves little inclined to correct their misconduct, are very solicitous to persuade themselves that, from the inherent and general imbecility of human nature, they are unable.

Indeed, wherever human creatures are found, there are also to be found vice and misery. Nor is this appearance only among the rude and the illiterate, but among those who are adorned with all the arts of human knowledge. Observation affords many examples of those, who, after having recommended virtue in the most forcible manner, with all the appearance of sincerity, have at last fallen into the disgrace and wretchedness of singular profligacy. Contrary to their conviction, their interest, their character, to all that seemed estimable in their own eyes, they have descended from the towering heights of virtue into the lowest abysses of vice.

Such instances do, indeed, sometimes occur, and they are usually blazoned and exaggerated by triumphant delinquency. In many cases of degeneracy, it is probable that the appearances of virtue were insincere. But allowing, what indeed the uniform decisions of observation, reason, and religion clearly declare, that human nature is weak in the extreme, yet I would

draw a different conclusion from that which is deduced by the patrons of libertinism.

The nature of man is extremely infirm, it is granted; and, therefore, I argue, let every effort be made to acquire new strength and resolution. It cannot be said that the endeavour must of necessity be abortive; it cannot be said that we have not natural incitements sufficient to encourage a vigorous attempt. We have nice sensibilities of moral rectitude, we have a natural love of excellence, we have intellectual powers capable of infinite improvement, we have precepts innumerable; and, to the honour of human nature, let it be added, that examples also greatly abound.

Many individuals who enrolled themselves among the severer sects of ancient philosophy have exhibited most animating proofs of the strength of human nature. It is not to be supposed that they possessed faculties more in number, or more perfect in their kind, than the present race. But they loved excellence, and they believed that they were capable of it. That belief operated most favourably on their exertion. They succeeded in their attempts, and stand forth among mankind like colossal statues amid a collection of images less than the life.

I hope, therefore, it will be rendering an effectual service to mankind, if I can revive among the gay and careless this belief of the possibility of great advances towards perfection. Philosophers have already received it; but philosophers are to the rest of mankind what a drop of water is to an ocean. The pretended philosophers are numerous indeed; but they commonly, in our time, divulge opinions which tend to degrade and vilify human nature. Popularity seems to be more their object than the sublime satisfaction of discovering and communicating useful truth. But were the generality of mankind convinced that they are capable of arriving at

high degrees of excellence, and consequently led to aspire at it, moral evil would certainly decrease, and society assume a fairer appearance. Much misery and much evil of all kinds will always be in it, during this sublunary state; but that share of it which is obstinately and presumptuously occasioned by our own folly may certainly be removed when that folly is corrected.

What is done in the works of art may often be effected in morals. Were a musical instrument to be placed in the hands of a peasant who had never heard or seen one, and were he told that he might, if he were to attend to it, call forth sounds from it which would delight every hearer, he would not be induced by any argument to believe the possibility of it. Yet let him regularly learn and practise a due time, and he will arrive at a degree of skill, which, though far from perfection, will appear miraculous on comparison with his original inability. So in life, if you inform your disciple that he is able to reach a great degree of excellence, and urge him to the attempt, he will infallibly make great advances, and improve to his own astonishment. But indulge his natural indolence, timidity, or despair, by expatiating on the irremediable weakness of human nature, and you effectually preclude even his endeavours, and add to his natural imbecility by paralysing his original vigour.

In the works of art, in sculpture, and in painting, in the subordinate operations of mechanical ingenuity, to what perfection does the hand of man attain? When a savage sees a watch, he adores it as a god. No earnestness of assertion would convince him that it was the work of a creature in all respects like himself, except in acquired dexterity. And can man improve himself so highly in the manual arts, in science, and in the productions of taste, and be unable to arrive

at real and solid improvement in the finest art and the noblest science, the art and the science of conducting life? Half the attention and the constancy which is displayed in acquiring skill in an occupation by which money is to be gained, if bestowed on the melioration of the morals, would usually produce a most laudable character.

The state of things is so constituted, that labour, well bestowed and properly directed, always produces a valuable effect. That it should find its reward, even in this world, seems to be the decree of Providence. Away, then, with the philosophy which increases the weakness of our nature by representing it as insuperable. Our personal excellence and happiness, our friends and our country, are greatly interested in exploding the pusillanimous doctrine. We shall, indeed, often fall; but let us rise undejected. Our failings will be great, but great also may be our virtues. At least, according to an old and just observation, by aiming at absolute perfection we shall approach it much more nearly than if we sit down inactive through a pusillanimous despair.

The modern philosophers and their disciples, while they assert the inefficacy of philosophy, of moral precepts, and of religious influence, are inclined to maintain, that the effect which these only pretend to produce may be actually produced by the principle of *modern honour*. I would only, in reply to their insinuation, ask them these questions: Who are the persons who openly and proudly commit deeds at which the child of nature, even the savage, would shudder; who is guilty of the meanest, cruellest seduction; who wears a sword ready to plunge it into the heart of his dearest friend for a trifling provocation; who is ready to glory in breaking the peace of conjugal life, and ruining a family for the gratification of lust or vanity? Unerring

experience replies, Men of Honour; all, all, honourable men.

From such delusion let the untainted mind of youth hasten to escape. To religion and morality let it fly for solid comfort, and for those assistances which alone can repair the ruins that have been made by the fall of Adam in the glorious fabric of human nature. With our utmost endeavours, both reason and divinity inform us we shall be at last greatly defective. Whither, then, shall we fly for succour? whither shall we turn to find that which shall support our weakness, and supply our defects? Philosophy is often vain, but religion never. To the Deity we must have recourse, who will certainly strengthen us by his grace, and pardon our involuntary failures, of his infinite mercy.

No. V.

ON THE FEAR OF APPEARING SINGULAR.

Few among mankind are able, and perhaps fewer are willing, to take the trouble of preserving with consistency a system of principles purely of their own selection. They separate themselves into large divisions, which, like the flock conducted by the sheep and bell, implicitly tread in the footsteps of some distinguished leader. Thus is the pain of consulting the judgment in every emergency easily avoided. The road becomes a beaten and a wide one, and each individual knows where to step, only by seeing the vestige of his predecessor.

But if the chosen leader be a treacherous or injudicious guide, the followers must inevitably be led into evil. Now it unfortunately happens, that the leaders, who are the most likely to attract the more numerous herds, are, in many cases, the least likely to possess the more valuable qualities. For what is it which chiefly attracts popular notice? Vanity and

effrontery. But these qualities imply dispositions obviously inconsistent with an eminent and solid virtue; though always united with showy, superficial, and deceitful ornaments. Thus it comes to pass, that the fashionable modes of thinking and living, whatever modes in the vicissitudes of human affairs assume that name, will seldom bear the test of inquiry, without discovering that they are, on many occasions, futile and culpable. For who, indeed, was the great legislator who established them? Some rich, gross, unphilosophical man, or some titled frivolous lady, distinguished for boldness, but not for excellence; vain, presumptuous, and dictatorial, though qualified neither by nature, parts, nor education, to prescribe to others, and elevated to a transitory empire by a concurrence of favourable contingencies with their own usurping and importunate intrusion. Once seated on the throne, their edicts are arbitrary and irresistible. With the authority of their signature, there is no deformity which will not assume the semblance of beauty, no vice which will not appear with all the confidence which naturally belongs to virtue, but which the delicacy of virtue is too apt to conceal.

The subjects of these self-erected tyrants are most truly slaves, though voluntary slaves; but as slavery of any kind is unfavourable to human happiness and improvement, I will venture to offer a few suggestions, which may induce the subjugated tribes to revolt, and claim their invaluable birthright, their natural liberty.

To select a model for imitation is one of the best methods of facilitating the acquisition of any excellence. A living model not only shows what is to be done, but how. The imitation must not, however, be servile. A servile imitation is that which obeys the dictates of the master without venturing, at any time or under any circumstances, to inquire into the reason of it. The

servile imitator paces in the same round, like the mill-horse, whose eyes are hood-winked, that he may not be allured by intervening objects to deviate from the tedious circle into a pleasanter or safer path of his own selection.

It may not be improper to premise, that to one individual his own natural rights and possessions, of whatever kind, are as valuable as those of another are to that other, however great, rich, or illustrious he may be. It is his own happiness which is concerned in his choice of principles and conduct. By these he is to stand, or by these to fall.

In making this important choice, then, let the sense of its importance lead him to assert the rights of man. These rights will justify him in acting and thinking, as far as the laws of that community whose protection he seeks can allow, according to the suggestions of his own judgment. He will do right to avoid adopting any system of principles, or following any pattern of conduct, dictated by fashion only, which his judgment has not pronounced conducive to his happiness, and consistent with his duties; consistent with those duties which he owes to his God, to his neighbour, to himself, and to his community. Though the small circle with whom he is personally connected may think and act differently, and may even despise and ridicule his singularity, yet let him persevere. His duty, his freedom, his conscience, and his happiness, must appear to every thinking man superior to all considerations under heaven.

Men act wrong scarcely less often from the defect of courage than of knowledge and of prudence. Dare to be wise, said an ancient; in order to which, it will first be necessary to dare to be singular. But in this and every other effort of virtue no step must be taken beyond the golden mean. The singularity which I

excites and soothes our sensibilities in a degree equal to that which is caused by our own offspring trained in the paths of wisdom, with the affectionate vigilance of parental superintendence.

Upon the whole, I cannot help thinking, that, however Pride may vaunt herself, and Fashion assume airs of superior wisdom in her choice, it is singularly foolish, absurd, and wicked, to decline any practices and any habits, however unusual, which evidently tend to render a man singularly learned, singularly good, and singularly happy.

No. VI.

ON THE INJUSTICE AND CRUELTY OF THE PUBLIC PAPERS.

A FREE country is that in which not only the life and the property of every individual, but his reputation also, which is often dearer to him than both, are secured by efficient laws. That country is not the land of perfect liberty, however it may arrogate the name, in which the character of every member may be traduced at pleasure in the most public manner, without redress, and without the possibility of an adequate exculpation. Oppression of the people may proceed from a part of the people, as well as from the throne. The liberty of the press is pregnant with advantages; but the licentiousness of it teems with evils which almost counterbalance them. It is true, that the liberty of the press is essential to civil liberty. But why do we estimate the enjoyment of civil liberty as one of the greatest of human blessings? Confessedly, because it allows the natural and reasonable possession of all the rights and privileges of man in the state of society; because it secures to him the enjoyment of all which God, and reason, and nature, and his relative situation have taught him to hold dear. That kind and degree, therefore, of liberty which cannot be secured without endangering all

these certainly frustrates the primary purpose of a free constitution. Liberty, under such circumstances, operates on human happiness with all the malignant influence of real despotism.

Our own country is constitutionally the freest on the face of the globe; yet there is a species of oppression arising from its freedom peculiarly cruel and unjust, as it often falls heaviest on the good, and peaceable, and the inoffensive.

It is true, indeed, that in this free country, we have laws for the punishment of defamation; but nothing is more easy than to evade them. They sometimes prevent an open attack; but they cannot preclude those various and indirect methods of disseminating calumny, which ingenuity, stimulated by malice or the hope of gain can easily invent.

The laws of the Twelve Tables made defamation, among the Romans, a capital crime. The punishment was rigorous. It appeared so in the age of Augustus, and was changed to corporal chastisement. It was again rendered capital in the reign of Valentinian; and the severity with which so wise a people as the Romans have treated this crime, from the earliest to the latest period of the empire, evidently shows how deep a sense they entertained of its malignant influence on the happiness of society.

Our laws are, indeed, less severe. We are justly jealous of our liberty. Far be it from me to suggest an idea which can tend to the infringement of that liberty. I am grateful to Providence for having placed me in a country where it so gloriously prevails. There is no sacrifice, consistent with innocence, which a good man would not make to hand down the blessings derived from his fathers undiminished to his children. What I now say tends most effectnally to preserve them inviolate: for, to express my ideas in the words

of the learned Blackstone, " to censure the licentiousness, is to maintain the liberty, of the press."

Let, therefore, the laws remain unaltered, if the alteration is attended with danger to constitutional freedom. I will only appeal to the hearts, the manners, and the understandings of my readers, for the voluntary reformation which I would effect; a reformation to be begun and completed by themselves, and which, instead of infringing on civil liberty, will enlarge its boundaries, and render it a diffusive good, almost unalloyed with evil: a rare condition of human felicity!

With respect to the writers and the publishers of newspaper calumny, they have usually but one or two objects in view; either the gratification of malice, or the earning of a morsel of bread. But hunger and passion are powerful incitements. The whispers of reason, and justice, and humanity, will scarcely be heard amidst the clamours of assailants so importunate. From them, therefore, we seek not redress by expostulation. We apply to the liberal sentiments of a people truly free, who value their freedom, and who possess sense enough to take the most effectual methods for its security. They will renounce the poor pleasure which they receive from the gratification of an improper curiosity, when they find that it cannot be gratified without rendering the liberty of the press a source of misery to the innocent; when they find that the licentiousness of the people more effectually saps the foundation of liberty, and destroys the best property, the property of a good name, than the ambition of any king or any minister.

Let us turn our attention to the origin and progress of that species of publication, which, within a few years, has become a general cause of complaint among all moderate and well-principled persons. In order to

gain notice, a newspaper must at first abound in virulent abuse and in scandalous anecdote. A letter-box is fixed to the window of some of the most public streets in the metropolis. Into this receptacle every dark assassin is tacitly invited to throw his poisoned dose. No man is so virtuous as not to have failings; no man is so inconsiderable as not to have enemies. Here, then, is an opportunity of exposing those secrets, which, perhaps, the confidence of a friend has made known to the treacherous divulger of them, and of gratifying the malice of a coward with safety, and by the infliction of the cruellest injury; that malice which was, perhaps, excited only by a superior degree of excellence. And who is to sit in judgment on what is received? Those who are often attentive to their interest alone. The papers are submitted to the consideration of some dark conclave; and, if it seems good to the invisible agents who sit in it, the tale of infamy, the oblique insinuation, the whisper of suspicion, the invention of the wanton, the belief of the credulous, the virulence of revenge, private pique, and public resentment, are, in a few hours, scattered over an empire.

In this manner the public erect a despot over themselves. One of their own order, and sometimes one of the obscurest persons in it, institutes a tribunal, where sentence is pronounced on all, frequently without due examination, and with little regard either to justice or to mercy. No other limits are assigned to the severe decree, which is issued out to brand with infamy the best of characters, than those which are necessary to escape the letter of the law, and elude the possibility of a successful prosecution. So unmanly and so cruel are the decisions of this arbitrary tribunal, that even female innocence is often punished with its severest sentences. Virgin purity and conjugal virtue are blackened with aspersions which can scarcely ever be

wiped off. Wounds are inflicted on the parent's heart which no time can heal; for one great misfortune attending this mode of scandal is, that, though all are ready to listen to the calumny, few have candour and patience to hear and admit the vindication. Many see the attack who never see the defence. Even if the vindication were as generally received as the abuse, it is a cruel necessity to be forced reluctantly forward on the public eye, to be obliged to answer severe and groundless charges brought by those who have no right, either by the laws of God or of man, to disseminate throughout the world an unprovoked accusation. Can that society be well regulated, where a mechanic is able to erect himself into an oppressive tyrant, to wound the heart of the innocent, break the peace of families, blacken the brightest characters, detract from the most allowed merit, degrade and lower every rank and dignity; and all this not only with impunity, but with such rewards from the public as enable him to amass an independent fortune, and laugh over the ruins on which he has erected his prosperity?

Many among us are heard to complain of the encroachments of government on the liberty of the subject, and of the oppressions of an administration. I ask every individual in the British empire, Whether he ever experienced a single act of oppression from the crown, or the ministers of the crown, equal to that which is daily and hourly inflicted, in the most arbitrary manner, by an editor of a licentious public paper? The severe punishments of the law cannot be inflicted by any power known to our constitution without a formal process, even on those who deserve them. But the operations of this engine of oppression, in the hands of an interested plebeian, unappointed, unauthorised, and unoffended, inflict the severest penalty, without judge, jury, witnesses, conscience, or humanity.

The man who is guilty of this violation of every social law, shall in the mean time think himself, and be thought by others, an honest man, and even a patriot; shall riot in plenty amidst friends and riches; while he who takes from me my purse, and the trash which it contains, perishes by the halter. All this is tolerated by a sensible and humane people, because, by the abuse of language, the licentiousness of the press is called its liberty.

I will not enlarge on the diabolical malignity of party and political abuse, which flows through these dirty channels. Malignant as it is in its nature and origin, it is in this age too much despised to effect much mischief. It as naturally pursues distinguished virtue, as a shadow the substance. If we take but a cursory view of past times, we shall see that many, who are now justly considered as models of virtue and of political wisdom, were in their day aspersed with all the venom which the virulence of party could expectorate upon them. On bad hearts and mean minds the lucrative advantages of high offices in the state will always have an influence irresistibly alluring. They will never rest at ease without a participation of them; but will engage some poor dependent printer to admit their poisonous writings into his paper, in hopes of supplanting others to make room for themselves. The poor printer considers his fortune made when patronized by ministers, and stands ready to calumniate the best men, or to speak treason for the confidential smile of a disappointed man, who would betray his country because he cannot procure a lucrative and distinguished place in the administration of its government.

I will not now expatiate on the wickedness of evil-speaking, a topic which has been admirably treated by the divines of England. If any reader can want to be informed how inconsistent it is with the spirit of

Christianity, and how pregnant with moral and social evil of every kind, I will refer him to all the most celebrated composers of sermons in the English language. But they who delight in scandal possess dispositions not to be delighted or reformed by the sermon of a Barrow, a Butler, or a Tillotson.

In the mean time, I will content myself with entreating readers of the better sort, the humane, and the well educated of the higher ranks (with whom I hope to prevail) to set a noble example, by refusing to give encouragement to those prints which are notorious for personal abuse and the publication of family secrets. It is but just to say, that there are some respectable conductors of the newspapers, who exclude, as far as human vigilance can exclude, all that is false, base, and injurious.

For their own sakes, the public should not encourage pamphlets and papers which deal in the bitterness of scandal. Their own hearts and happiness will be injured by the perusal of them, and they cannot know how soon it may be their turn to suffer by the malignity which they are now so ready to enjoy.

It is, indeeed, a melancholy truth, that the love of calumny, and the curiosity to be acquainted with the private affairs of all distinguished characters, are become so general, that a work scarcely wants any other recommendation, if it professes personality and anecdote. The prevalence of this cruel taste precludes the relish of innocent and ingenious works on general topics. It also habituates the mind to delight in cruelty and malice; for, as the feeling Goldsmith says, "like the tiger that seldom desists from pursuing man, after having once preyed upon human flesh, the reader who has once gratified his appetite with calumny, makes ever after the most agreeable feast on murdered reputation."

No. VII.

ON FORMING A TASTE FOR SIMPLE PLEASURES.

To argue against pleasure in general is absurd. It is the law of nature, that every animal should prefer the agreeable sensations to the disagreeable. But it is incumbent on the moralist to explode those pleasures, which, though they are transient and unsatisfactory in themselves, are yet found ultimately to occasion permanent pain and real injury.

Perhaps the most effectual mode of accomplishing this purpose, is not to arraign pleasure in general, but to substitute other pleasures in the place of those which are hurtful. Man must be amused and delighted; and pernicious amusements and poisoned delights will be pursued, if others cease to be obvious.

It is certain that nature has interspersed a great number of objects capable of affording the liveliest delight, without danger of future pain, and even with the probability of deriving improvement and additional pleasure by reflecting on the past enjoyment. Such, indeed, are those innocent pleasures which we follow in early youth with cheerful ardour, and which we enjoy with sincere delight, before we are vitiated and hardened by a long intercourse with a depraved world; before the qualities of the lamb and dove are exchanged for the less amiable wisdom of the wolf and the serpent.

Amidst all the improvements which we make in a state of high civilisation, we lose some natural tastes and propensities which were favourable to virtue. We acquire wants and notions which disturb our repose, and cause a feverish anxiety, ever thirsting, and never satisfied.

The simple and innocent satisfactions of nature are usually within reach; and, as they excite no violent perturbation in the pursuit, so are they enjoyed without tumult, and relinquished without long or painful regret.

It will, then, render essential service both to happiness and morality, if we can persuade men in general to taste and to contract an habitual relish for the genuine satisfactions of uncorrupted nature.

One of the first affections which the heart perceives, is filial piety. As years increase, this affection dilates, and extends itself to brothers and sisters, relatives and domestics. The child loves and is beloved by all around him. Amidst the conversation, the events, the endearments, and tender duties of a family, he finds full play for all his faculties and propensities, and is often, by his own subsequent confession, happier at this early age than in any period which succeeds it.

I say then, that, were a taste for this simple pleasure retained, were men at a mature age led to seek their happiness in domestic life, and in the exercise of the mild virtues of family offices, their enjoyments, though less brilliant and noisy, would be purer and more substantial. But, on the contrary, we see them no sooner arrived at maturity, than they eagerly leave the nest, and wander, in search of an untried and an imaginary bliss, through all the wilds of dissipation. In the precipitate pursuit, innocence is often lost; and whatever progress is made in refinement, little is added to solid happiness. Our interest, as we falsely call it, and our honour, become the idols whom we devoutly worship, and on whose altars we sacrifice health, truth, peace, and liberty.

We are, indeed, so deeply engaged in our objects, that we cannot advert to the beauties of nature, those fertile sources of unadulterated pleasure. The young mind is always delighted with rural scenery. The earliest poetry was pastoral, and every juvenile poet of the present day delights to indulge in the luxuriance of a rural description. A taste for these pleasures will render the morning walk at least as delightful as the

evening assembly. The various forms which Nature assumes in the vicissitudes of the seasons, constitute a source of complacency which can never be exhausted. How grateful to the senses the freshness of the herbage, the fragrancy of the flowers, and all those simple delights of the field, which the poets have, from the earliest ages, no less justly than exuberantly described! "It is all mere fiction," exclaims the man of the world, "the painting of a visionary enthusiast." He feels not, he cannot feel, their truth. He sees no charms in herbs and blossoms; the melody of the grove is no music to his ear; and this happens, because he has lost, by his own fault, those tender sensibilities which nature had bestowed. They are still daily perceived in all their perfection by the ingenuous and innocent, and they have been most truly described by feeling poets, as contributing to pure, real, and exalted delight.

Yet the possessor of extensive lands, if he is a man of fashion and spirit, forsakes the sweet scenes of rural nature, and shuts himself up in a coffee-house, at a gaming-table, in a fetid assembly; and leaves that liberal air which breathes over his lawns, and agitates his forests, to be inhaled by his menial rustics. He perverts the designs of nature, and despises the hereditary blessings of Providence; and he receives the adequate punishment in a restless life, perpetually seeking and never finding satisfaction. But the employments of agriculture, independently of their profit, are most congenial and pleasing to human nature. An uncorrupted mind sees, in the progress of vegetation, and in the manners and excellencies of those animals which are destined to our immediate service, such charms and beauties as art can seldom produce. Husbandry may be superintended by an elegant mind; nor is it by any means necessary that they who engage in it should contract a coarseness of manners or a vulgarity

of sentiment. It is most favourable to health, to plenty, to repose, and to innocence; and great, indeed, must be the objects which justify a reasonable creature in relinquishing these. Are plays, are balls, are nocturnal assemblies of whatever denomination, are debancheries in all their modifications, which tend to rob us of sleep, to lessen our patrimony, to injure our health, to render us selfish, vicious, thoughtless, and useless, equivalent to these? Reason replies in the negative; yet the almost universal departure from innocence and simplicity will leave the affirmative established by a corrupt majority.

It is not without a sigh that a thinking man can pass by a lordly mansion, some sweet retreat, deserted by its falsely-refined possessor, who is stupidly carousing in the squares of a polluted city. When he sees the chimney without smoke in the venerable house, where all the country was once welcomed to partake of princely hospitality, he cannot help lamenting that progress of refinement, which, in rendering the descendants of the great fine gentlemen, has left them something less than men, through the defect of manly virtues.

The superintendence of a garden might of itself occupy a life elegantly and pleasurably. Nothing is better able to gratify the inherent love of novelty; for Nature is always renewing her variegated appearance. She is infinite in her productions, and the life of man may come to its close before he has seen half the pictures which she is able to display. The taste for gardening in England is at present pure. Nature is restored to her throne, and reigns majestically beautiful in rude magnificence. The country abounds with cultivated tracts truly paradisiacal. But as the contemplative observer roams over the lawn, and enjoys the shade of the weeping willow, he is often led to inquire, "Where is now the owner of this wilderness of sweets?

Happy man!" he exclaims, " to possess such a spot as this, and to be able at all times to taste the pleasure which I feel springing in my bosom." But, alas! the owner is engaged in other scenes. He is rattling over the streets of London, and pursuing all the sophisticated joys which succeed to supply the place where Nature is relinquished. If he condescends to pay an annual visit to the retreat, he brings with him all his acquired inclinations; and while he sits at the card-table or at the banquet, and thinks of little else than promoting his interest at the next election, he leaves the shrub to blossom and the rose to diffuse its sweets in unobserved solitude.

Can it be believed that Nature bestowed beauty on the foliage of a flower but with a view to please? The fruit might be produced, in the same process, without any richness and diversity of colour. No other animals are sensible of their grace but the human; and yet the austere man of business, or the vain man of pleasure, will arraign another with a face of importance for his admiration of a flower. He calls the taste trifling and useless. But is not a refusal to be pleased with such appearances like the malignant unthankfulness of a sullen guest who refuses to taste the most delicious dainties prepared for his entertainment?

Fine weather in England is the source of a very sensible pleasure; but he who is engrossed by vice or by business will live half a life without admiring the beauties of a blue sky, basking in the vernal sunshine, or inhaling, with any consciousness of delight, the balsam of a western gale.

A fondness for the pleasing animals which Nature has placed around us is another source of natural, and pure, and innocent amusement. The plumage and the song of the bird were, doubtless, intended to delight the ear and the eye. Who can behold the playful

lamb without complacency? The fidelity of the dog, the generosity of the horse, and the characteristic qualities, as well as shape and beauty, of all animated nature, are admirably adapted to charm the heart which is yet unspoiled.

But in a proper intercourse and behaviour among our fellow creatures is found to consist our principal and most constant delight. To do good and to prevent evil, as far as the sphere of our influence or activity extends, is an infallible method of deriving to ourselves pleasurable emotions. And if we consult what passes in our bosoms before our youthful sensibilities are blunted, we shall find that Nature has taught us to feel the sweetest pleasure in relieving distress, and in communicating happiness.

The cunning and the crafty, of whom consists a great part of the busy crowd, who derive an unnatural influence from the possession of riches, will deem the simplicity which I have recommended folly. Such men will deem truth also folly. They consider virtue and truth as words invented to delude the simple ones; but, indeed, to retain through life something of the simplicity of the infant, will render the improved and cultivated man truly wise. For, after all the refinements of false philosophy, and the low arts of worldly cunning, honesty is our truest interest, and innocence our best wisdom.

No. VIII.

ON SUPPORTING THE DIGNITY OF THE COMMERCIAL CHARACTER.

In a country whose insular situation has rendered it naturally commercial, it is good policy to place the mercantile profession in an honourable light. It has not usually held a very high place in the esteem of the world; because, in most countries, it has been disgraced by covetousness and circumvention. Its primary object,

the accumulation of money, has never appeared with any peculiar lustre in the eyes of those who have seen the beauty of disinterested patriotism and heroic generosity. But, at the same time, it is certain that a mercantile life affords scope for the display of many good qualities and of virtues, which, from their sublime and difficult nature, may constitute the merchant a practical philosopher. It affords an ample field for the exercise of commutative justice, and of self-denial in refusing to take advantages which might be taken with secrecy. Large and extensive commerce, instead of narrowing, has enlarged the sentiments; and British merchants have, in the last two centuries, joined to the most exemplary integrity the most liberal beneficence.

But it must be owned that mercantile men appeared most respectable when they least departed from their peculiar character. In the present age many of them have relinquished the simplicity of their ancestors, and endeavouring to import the airs and manners of a court into a counting-house, have lost much of their independence and real dignity.

It has been said, that, in order to preserve a political constitution in its original purity, it is necessary, at certain intervals, to reduce it to its primary principles. Deviation from right, and encroachment on error, are the natural consequences of human infirmity, in the progressive revolution of affairs. It is, therefore, as necessary in morals as in politics to return to principles and manners which have been insensibly forsaken in the pursuit of innovation; and the manners of our predecessors in the mercantile line, which we now despise as simple and unrefined, will be found, in many instances, more conducive to national and personal happiness than many among their nominal improvements which have superseded their prevalence.

I will not dwell on theoretical observations, but deduce my remarks from real life. I assert, then, that the merchants of the present times are often ashamed of the character of citizens. My proof is the fact that they desert the city. No sooner have they accumulated a competent sum, than the noble mansion in a venerable old street is forsaken for a smart house in a new-built square. The principal's presence is thus removed from the scene of action, and opportunities are afforded for every species of idleness and fraud in the inferior substitutes. Habits are contracted, and intimacies formed in the new region, most opposite to the spirit of commerce. Late hours and irregular banquets are not at all conducive to that punctuality which constitutes one of the most valuable and ornamental qualities of a respectable merchant. Great and enormous wealth can, indeed, support almost any species of folly; but the misfortune is, that they who have their fortunes to make will emulate those who have already made them. To live at the next door to a peer, or in a street with dukes, is a temptation scarcely resistible. Add to these solid satisfactions of the merchant himself, that the ladies of the family feel new degrees of gentility, like inspiration, gradually come upon them as they approach more nearly to the purlieus of St. James's.

It was not thus that a Gresham raised a fortune and a reputation equal to the most renowned personages of his time. It was by industry, temperance, regularity, close application, and by leaving those to follow fashion whose shallow intellects could not find a worthier object to pursue. It would have been an ill exchange to have given up the title of the father of the greatest city in Europe, and the glory of founding a college and a forum, for the petty vanity of residing in the circle of fashion; to have descended from the first

in the neighbourhood of the Exchange, to be the last in Grosvenor or Berkeley-square.

I would advise the merchant, who would live with real dignity, to make the city respectable, if he does not find it so, by displaying his worth in it. Worthy conduct, with a noble fortune, will aggrandize any place. Adorn that situation in which it is your lot to be fixed. *Spartam quam nactus es, orna.* Where, indeed, ought men to expend their opulence more readily than where it was amassed, where their characters are known, and their virtues valued?

Many evils result from this general emigration from the city. The influence of good example is lost among the numerous tribe of apprentices, clerks, and journeymen, who are the rising generation of merchants; but whose morals are early tainted with the foulest infection, by running after those vanities and pleasures which their superintendent appears so anxiously to pursue. They are led to despise that city and those manners which their master avoids as a place of contamination.

The city of London, as a corporate body, suffers at this moment by the contempt of the members who owe it most respect. When the rich and respectable leave it, who are to fill its magistracies and its council? The lower orders of tradesmen, destitute of education and of liberal views, and thrust forward into office by nothing but their own pragmatical activity. No wonder a corporation has lost its influence, and sullied its honours, when those who stand forth as its leaders are among the meanest of its members. The opulent and most consequential have packed up their effects as soon as they have acquired all they wanted, and left the pillaged city to stand or fall, as it may happen. They are no longer citizens, but esquires at their villas, and courtiers within the vicinity of the palace. Like the

reptile emerging from the mud, they have dropt their slough, and, basking on the sunny bank of prosperity, shine with a new cuticle.

A time has been, when merchants only retired to their villas when they had accumulated their fortunes. They now begin with a villa, as if it were as necessary as a warehouse; and end with bankruptcy as naturally, as unreluctantly, and as unblushingly, as if it had been the honourable object of their mercantile pursuit. Distress and difficulty excite meanness and artifice; fraud and injustice soon follow, and the dignity of the British merchant is sunk in the scandalous appellation of a swindler.

The fall of the eminent trader involves many in the misfortune. His wife and children are reduced from a life of splendour and luxury to indigence and obscurity; to a state which they bear less patiently, because they have been accustomed to indulge their vanity and pride without controul. Vice, and every species of misery, are increased by this imprudent conduct in his own family, and poverty brought into the houses of his inferior assistants, or dependants, who have either intrusted him with their money or their labour unrepaid.

This is a picture drawn from life: what it represents often occurs; and the whole of it is occasioned by the merchant's departure from his natural and his most becoming character.

In order to resume that character, let him consider what virtues his department of life particularly requires. He will find them to be industry, honesty, and frugality. Let him seriously pursue them, nor ever be ashamed of them. Let him not dread the appellation of a dull cit, nor any of those jokes with which the envy and malice of witlings console themselves on another's superiority. Let him assure himself that the character of a man of integrity and benevolence is far

more desirable than that of a man of pleasure or of fashion. The one is like solid gold, the other like tinsel; the one is like a venerable oak, the other like the gaudy and transitory tulip; the one is always blest and a blessing, the other frequently a curse. Dare to be what you are, is a rule, which, if observed, would secure to men that happiness, of which the greater part never see any thing but the phantom; embracing the cloud in the place of the goddess.

The great cause of mercantile miscarriage is, that the merchant usually begins in a mode of life which should naturally adorn a successful conclusion. He begins, as it has been before observed, with rural retreat, and with expensive relaxation; with those pleasures which should, in the regular course, be reserved as the reward of his toils, and the comfort of his age, *ut in otia recedant*. He spends his active days in superfluous and unsatisfactory indulgence, and dooms the winter of life to want, to neglect, to a prison, or an alms-house. I believe it is true, that at least as many bankrupts are made by some species of misconduct as by misfortune.

In a country abounding with merchants, some of these hints may be thought useful, and be adopted by a few in the rising generation; and the example of a few may in time be generally followed, and constitute at last a prevailing mode of mercantile life.

No. IX.

AN IDEA OF A PATRIOT.

Heroic virtue, in its most exalted and comprehensive degree, though often celebrated, is not often found. It must, indeed, like all other prodigies, appear but seldom. To produce it, it is necessary, that besides an union of the finest qualities of the heart and under-

standing, many favourable contingencies, which no abilities can command, should at once concur in the same individual. A Cæsar and an Alexander, if they had been born in a cottage, might have died in obscurity. And, indeed, after all the eulogia passed upon them, it may be fairly asked, Whether, if such had been their lot, mankind would have had cause to lament?

None but a barbarous age can admire the bloody triumphs of the mere conqueror; but every age must agree in extolling the true patriot. True patriotism, which is a species of heroic virtue, and indeed the best species of it, does not often occur. The name is daily assumed, and in our country has sometimes lost its dignity by prostitution. It has been wantonly lavished on those, who, from the worst motives, have fomented faction, and kindled the flames of rebellion. It has been denied to the preservers of their country, and given to the destroyers of it; to those who have spent their lives, and exercised the abilities they possessed, in producing all those evils which the institution of civil society was intended to extirpate; to those who had little else in view but to render themselves of consequence enough to be bought by a corrupt administration. Selfishness and spite, pride and a levelling principle, are qualities very unfavourable to the existence of civil liberty. Yet these qualities have appeared very clearly in pretended patriots, who have laboured to be forced into power by the efforts of a fascinated populace.

For the sake, then, of those orders among us whose hearts are good and truly English, but who, from the want of education or leisure, are not apt to think coolly when they select a favourite leader, and who are often cruelly and villanously deluded to their own destruction, and to the detriment of that liberty which they

love, I will endeavour to describe those characters which appear to me truly patriotic.

In the first place, I would lay it down as an axiom, That a bad man cannot be a patriot. Even the badness of his heart may lead him to assume all the deceitful appearances of patriotism. His envy, and his disappointed avarice and ambition, will induce him to revile those who are in possession of lucrative and powerful employments, and this will appear like a noble opposition to the strides of power. To serve his purposes, he will declaim on liberty, and this will soon collect a party. Fools and wicked men abound. These soon herd together, and even render themselves of some consequence by their numbers. Honest men are drawn in by the violence of the vortex, and the wicked leader at last gains his selfish views, or at least obtains the satisfaction of mortifying those whom he envies. At all events, he is sure of one pleasure which is congenial to his heart, — that of spreading mischief and confusion. I repeat, therefore, that it will be necessary to convince ourselves, that a bad husband, a bad father, a profligate and an unprincipled man, cannot deserve the name of a patriot, unless it be given him, as it may indeed in the present age, by way of derision. A man of no private virtue must want principle; and a man who wants principle cannot be actuated by pure motives. He cannot entertain so liberal and exalted an affection as a rational and disinterested love of his country. He may accidentally be right in his opposition to a court; but he is a bad man, and it is not safe to trust him. He may be the wicked instrument of gratifying my spleen or his own; but yet I will think before I lift up my hand to vote for him, lest his turbulence, united with the power which I may assist, in delegating to him, may involve my country in war, riot, and rebellion. I will remember what is past, and be cautious.

Much has been said by the declamatory on the subject of a patriot king. I believe it happy for a nation when the king has not the qualities of a declaimer's patriot, of an active warrior, or a contentious orator. When a king possesses or arrogates the character of a hero, his reign is often sanguinary, and terminates in despotism. Moderation, justice, lenity, and a pacific disposition, are the most valuable, if not the most glittering, jewels in a crown. I almost fear to apply the remark to the king of England, lest I should be suspected of interested adulation. But truth must prevail. And when I see the chief magistrate a good son, a good husband, a good father, I think it a favourable presage of all that is amiable and useful to society. When I see him also possessing fortitude enough to turn a deaf ear to the importunate petitions and remonstrances of a deluded faction; when I see him sacrificing with alacrity his own wishes and views to the will of his people at large; when I see him anxious to preserve the liberties of the meanest of his subjects, delighted with benevolent actions, seeking and ensuing peace from motives of philanthropy, yet prosecuting war, when unfortunately necessary, with all the spirit of a righteous cause; encouraging arts and promoting discoveries; when I see all his amiable dispositions and his many laudable acts, I venture to pronounce George the Third a patriot king. The characters of kings are, indeed, but uncertainly known while they live; and I am ready to confess, that I derive my ideas of the king of England from no other sources but public acts and popular reports*.

If a peer of the realm is found to be in constant opposition to the measures of a ministry, it is easy to

* This Essay was written during the popularity of that pseudo-patriot, John Wilkes, and before the American war was continued against the voice of the nation.

know the causes and the extent of his patriotism; for a minister cannot always be wrong. The truth is, that the peer is of a conceited and turbulent spirit, yet unemployed by his king. He lusts after power, and hopes to acquire it by force, since it cannot be obtained by gentler means. He will even patronize rebellion, and diffuse discontent throughout the kingdom, to injure a few individuals, whose riches he covets, and whose honours he views with an envious eye. Though he should sign a hundred protests in a session, and daily eructate his invectives against the most respectable men, we will not be misled; for his patriotism is his passion, his perseverance avarice; and the same tongue which is ready to revile his king and embroil his country, is usually as prone to blaspheme his God. When they whom the constitution has appointed hereditary guardians of the laws, and liberties, and religion of their country, become the patrons of lawless licentiousness, and the scoffers at every thing sacred, why hesitate their countrymen to strip the coronet from their heads, and to trample on their honour? The laws should interfere to tear off their ermine, and that star which belies their breast; for the meanest of their menials, who performs his humble duties in his humble station, is far nobler than they. There ought to be exercised a power of degradation from honour, as well as of advancement, in every well-regulated community. Such an institution, duly applied, would contribute to preserve true nobility, and to secure the interests of virtue in every rank and condition.

With respect to the noisy declaimers, and the quiescent instruments of power in the lower order of senators, their patriotism is well understood. The one side resembles Cerberus barking for a sop; the other resembles him, when, after he has received it, he wraps

himself up in his own warm skin, and enjoys a comfortable doze. The public has been too long deluded to be again deceived. They see the faults, and no longer admire, but look for a palliation of them in the common weakness of human nature.

In search of patriots, let us turn our attention to the naval and military order. And when we take a retrospect of this department, let us learn to be cautious how we again illuminate our houses, and render our throats hoarse with reiterated acclamation. However we may dote on their names, they are no patriots, who, from party principles or from personal pique, voluntarily suffer our perfidious and inveterate enemy to triumph over us unchastised. They are no patriots, who wish to exalt the military above the civil power. They are no patriots, who, in a time when every military arm ought to have wielded the sword, relinquish their employ because they hate a minister. They are no patriots, but they are poltroons. In which class, also, are to be placed those generals, who, when sent on the service of their country, lavish the money with which they are intrusted in unnecessary profusion, and return without an action,—*cauponantes bellum non belligerentes*,—who bluster and boast, but who, to save their lives, will lose their honour, and endanger their country's existence*.

And what are those writers to be called, who, perverting the faculty of reason and the fruits of learning, endeavour to unsettle all our principles under the pretence of asserting our liberty? Patriots shall we call them? Alas! when I see them obviously actuated by pride and vanity, and, for the sake of being distinguished, endeavouring to overturn good order and

* Most of the above strictures, and especially the latter, allude to persons and events, which, though notorious when this Essay was written, are now almost forgotten.

tranquillity, I call them the enemies of the human race; and if I did not pity their delusion, I might execrate their names. It is certain, that writers, who have meant little more than to raise a literary reputation, have excited the most dreadful commotions in the commonwealth, and dissemminated principles destructive of civil society.

I will venture to advance an opinion rather paradoxical, but certainly well founded: The truest patriotism is not always to be found in public life. Selfish motives commonly instigate the noisy votaries of ambition and popularity. But what can influence him who secretly serves his country in the retired and unobserved walks of private life? His motives must be pure, and he *is a patriot*. Men of fortune and dignity, who, dwelling peaceably in the habitations of their fathers, set a good example; who endeavour to preserve from the rude hand of innovation all the good institutions of our ancestors; who are given to hospitality, ready to assist with their presence and their purse in all public business and useful charities; men of this kind are truly patriots. Every good man is, indeed, a patriot; for a good man is a public good. But poverty, and an humble and a private station, must circumscribe the beneficial influence of goodness; and it does not fall to the lot of many philanthropists to possess power equal to their good dispositions.

No. X.

THE RESPECTABLE BODY OF THE CLERGY.

It seems probable, at first sight, that an order of men, who devote themselves entirely to the instruction of their fellow-creatures, would be exempted from envy and from hatred. As their studies are peaceable, and their labours directed to the diffusion of goodness, and

consequently of tranquillity, both public and private, it is natural to suppose that the better part of the world would view them with favour, and that even the profligate would behave to them with distant respect.

But it is certain, that scarcely any other body of men, so large and considerable, has been more unkindly traduced than the clergy. Every patron of infidelity who endeavours to pierce the sides of the Redeemer, points the envenomed weapon at his ministers. But the patrons of infidelity have always been found, on close examination, no less superficial and sophistical than malignant and presumptuous. They have, therefore, fixed indiscriminately upon every clergymen the imputation of certain odious sentiments of a political nature; as if it were consistent with reason or common sense to suppose, that the moment a gentleman of liberal education receives a legal commission from the ecclesiastical superior to pray aloud in an assembly, or to read a moral and religious discourse in it, all his political sentiments are rendered erroneous, or dissimilar to the opinions of those amongst his countrymen who are equally enlightened.

That the clerical sentiments in politics, supposing that the clergy entertain any peculiar to their profession, are favourable to liberty, and to all the dearest rights of mankind in the aggregate, and of individuals in their relative connexions, might be clearly proved by historical evidence. My design does not permit me to expatiate in the field of history, or it were easy to produce very signal instances of the noble stand they have made for liberty, religious as well as civil.

They have, also, sometimes been hostile to freedom. But so have many of the nobles of the time, and many of the inferior orders among the laity. They pursued that civil conduct, and adopted those political sentiments, which are agreeable to them as men, and not

peculiar to them as clergymen. If they acted from honest principles, though their judgment should be impeached for error, no censure will fall on their clerical profession. When they became clergymen, they did not renounce their rights as men, nor their liberty of judging and acting, which they derived from the constitution of that community to whose support they contributed.

It is inequitable to judge of the present race of ecclesiastics from the specimens afforded in the darker ages. The clergy were then ignorant, vicious, and superstitious; but the laity were more so. The clergy were such as they must have been without sufficient employment, without examples, without learning, and without the means of acquiring it. Yet, even in this unpromising state, they were serviceable to letters and to virtue. They transcribed and preserved books, while they often did not understand what they copied, nor know the value of the treasures they possessed. They preserved those lamps of learning from which, though they themselves derived but little light, the world has been since most gloriously illuminated.

But to enter on the merits or demerits of clerical individuals of past ages, is to engage on a subject too diffusive to be consistent with the present purpose. It may be more advantageous, as well as practicable, to consider this respectable body as it appears at present. The clergy, like all other orders in society, undergo a change in the progressive vicissitudes of times and manners; and what might truly characterize them in one age, or in one country, will misrepresent them in another. In the papal church, and under an absolute government, they are totally different from a Protestant and an English clergy; they are not so much the ministers of the humble Jesus as the tools of a secular and ecclesiastical despot. In a country like ours,

they imbibe the liberal spirit of our civil constitution; and, by the light of their learning and morals, greatly add to the general lustre. Indeed, if an individual cease to be valued, the fault is usually his own. Improper levities, compliances, or negligences, diminish that dignity which his office, his labours, and his learning, would otherwise maintain.

Of the dignitaries of the church it is no uncommon topic to complain. They are often represented as the drones of society; as idle slumbering in a stall without making any return to the public for the ease and luxury which they abundantly enjoy. Selfishness, avarice, and voluptuousness, are satirically attributed to them as their distinguished characteristics; and it is remarked, that they would be blanks in society, were not their existence demonstrated by an unceasing pursuit of money, preferment, and luxurious gratification.

But, in answer to these acrimonious reflections, we may say, in general, that all situations which possess many happy circumstances with little labour or anxiety will naturally excite envy and malignity. The dignitaries of the church enjoy that ease and those innocent pleasures in which men naturally repose when they possess a competency without the necessity of solicitude. That they step not from their proper sphere to engage in the conflicts of party, redounds to their honour. Parochial employments are regularly filled by other persons. To invade the province of the officiating clergy, would be to disturb that order which constitutes one of the beauties of religion itself, as well as of all ecclesiastical establishments. If they are decent and pacific, benevolent in their neighbourhood, hospitable to the inferior clergy, and virtuous in private life, they are, notwithstanding the appearance of indolence, both ornamental and useful to the church and to society. They are more respectable than if their restlessness led

them to be at the head of an association against liberty or to preach war. And with respect to the expediency of dignites in the church, I am not of the same opinion with those penurious philosophers, whose ideas of utility are curcumscribed within the limits of actual profit. As human nature is constituted, something is to be allowed to external appearance, and something to innocent enjoyment. Wealth, ease, and honour, such as are included in ecclesiastical dignities, operate as allurements to bring many into the church who become valuable members of it, but who would otherwise have wasted their lives in a state of vicious indolence, and without any profession. I would neither divest a king nor a prelate of those outworks, which either defend him from contempt, or facilitate the exercise of his jurisdiction, or contribute to his complacency.

If persons thus exalted to ease and honour, and thus exempted from exertion, lower themselves by remarkable levity, by rendering themselves most conspicuous at all public places, and by patronizing vanity, they then become truly despicable, and richly deserve the public resentment. That the majority of dignitaries preserve their character, and are respectable, I firmly believe; and I say it without partiality or adulation.

The character and office of a parish priest, when uniformly and completely maintained, are most useful and honourable. A worthy parish priest is the father of his parish, the guardian of the poor, the instructor of the ignorant, the protector of the injured, the friend of all; even of those who are deaf to his instructions, and despise his profession. If any human office can be justly called godlike, it is the office of a parish priest.

But when I turn my attention to real facts, I frequently find the ministers of parishes neither the objects of love nor of esteem. This is sometimes occasioned by the prevalence of infidelity, and sometimes, as it must

happen while the clergy are men, by their own want of merit and their bad behaviour. But one cause of their losing their influence is, that the laity, in this age of scepticism, grudge them their tithes. The decay of religion and the contempt of the clergy, arise in a great measure from this source.

I will not enter fully on the subject of tithes, but I will make a cursory remark. Let the laity ask themselves, By what tenure any one among them has a better right than any other to reap the produce of any particular field, and to exclude others of the laity from it? They must answer, By the laws of the country in which they reside. But the same laws have given the clergy a right to a decimal part. If the obedience is due to the laws in one respect, it is due also in another. And a man who has no land at all, may as justly complain that his neighbour assumes an exclusive right to the acres contiguous to his dwelling, as the possessor of the acres that the clergyman claims a tenth part of their produce. The rights of the clergy, indeed, stand on a basis more solid than the national constitution. The objections raised to them originate in selfishness, greediness, and the unfeeling stupidity of irreligion. Every candid and considerate mind must rejoice that the clergy have often spirit enough to prosecute fair and legal claims against the harpies of avarice.

If the incumbent made no claim on the purse of his parishioner, he might be loved and esteemed, or at least suffered to live and die in peace. But his wife and his children are dear to him, and have an equal right, by all the laws of God and man, to be fed and clothed with those of the esquire or farmer who litigates his claim. He is cruel, and worse than a heathen, who endeavours not to provide for his own child, by receiving what is justly his due; since, if he does not receive it, that child, the very moment he expires, may

be spurned as a beggar from the door of the churlish peasant who robbed the father of his right.

But where is the utility of the clergy? exclaims the boor, who pays his taxes cheerfully, but refuses his tithes. Surely one might answer, National good does not consist only in the number of ships which arrive in our ports, the extent of our dominions, and the abundance of our armaments. Good morals and internal tranquillity are, in reality, of more value, whatever splendour these may display. These, indeed, according to their original design, are only instrumental to the establishment of internal peace and social happiness, though they are daily abused to effect the purpose of avarice and ambition, and are always talked of as the first objects. If, then, good morals and internal tranquillity are the chief national good, as they certainly are in the eye of Heaven and of dispassionate reason, the clergy must be allowed to deserve their very moderate emoluments; for let us consider how many millions are lavished in the support of armaments, and how very small a pittance, in comparison, supports the parochial clergy, to whose important ends, internal peace and happiness, the armaments are only subordinately, mechanically, and remotely subservient. That minister, or financier, whatever the world may think, possesses a narrow and unphilosophical mind, who estimates the good of a people solely by the extent of their commerce and the largeness of the revenue. When these are in their most flourshing state, the people as individuals, and therefore the nation, may be in their decline. Luxury and vice of every kind may be diffusing misery among all the individuals in the nation; and can there be a national happiness independent of the happiness of the majority of individuals, or consistent with their misery? According to the wretched system of worldly-minded politicians, there can. Nay,

even the misery of individuals is often promoted and encouraged, in order to increase this political happiness, which exists only as an ideal phantom. Intoxication and gaming, for instance, as they increase the revenue, are at this moment tacitly encouraged throughout England. The consumption of spirituous liquors, though it slays millions at home, helps to support those wars abroad, which ambition and wickedness have sometimes rendered politically unavoidable.

But the clergy recommend innocence, contentment, temperance, and all the moral virtues, with all the blessings and comfort which attend them; and in estimating their national utility, let a liberal and benevolent man consider what an advantage it is to have moral instructors diffused over the kingdom, established in the remotest villages, not only among the polished, but among the rudest of our countrymen, who would probably relapse into barbarism and savage brutality if their minds were not cultivated by weekly lectures, powerfully recommending, by the most awful sanctions, all that is humane and friendly to human nature and civil society. And yet the public, who pay a soldier liberally and cheerfully, often, in this age, bestow with reluctance what the law of God and of their country has allotted to the clergyman, and what his order can claim by the most ancient prescription. They refuse, at the same time, that degree of reverence to him which ought to be more highly valued by him than his revenue, as it is absolutely necessary to the success of his pastoral labour.

I will here pay that tribute of respect which justice owes to the Dissenting ministers. The gravity of their manners, and their judicious conduct in a variety of instances, have deservedly procured them a very considerable share of public estimation. Many among them, besides a Watts, have illustriously adorned human nature.

With respect to the order of curates, on whom the essential business of a national clergy chiefly devolves, all the respect which is due to the clergy in general, and to the active clergy in particular, is indisputably due to them. The mediocrity of their stipends may, indeed, degrade them in the eyes of the rich vulgar; in the eyes of those who, feeling the obvious good of money, and insensible to other excellence, idolize Mammon, and despise those who possess it not in superfluous abundance. But the Christian will consider their poverty as one of their chief honours. That they are capable of maintaining a decent appearance, and discharging the expenses which are necessary to their subsistence with an income less than that of many mechanics, reflects on them more true credit than would be derived from the possession of an ample fortune. Though human pride may spurn them, yet their God will honour them; and when they perform their arduous duties with conscientious regularity, even bad men must yield them an involuntary deference. It may be doubted whether or not some late legislative act for the melioration of the curates' condition, will not be ultimately injurious to them and to the ecclesiastical constitution. The persons who promoted them meant well, but had a very imperfect knowledge of the subject. It is indeed a very delicate subject; and the lay lords might act wisely in leaving it to the hierarchy.

When, indeed, they affectedly assume the character of libertines and rakes, and dress themselves so as to suggest an idea that they are ashamed of appearing as clergymen; when they take the lead in public diversions; when they are eminently careless and immoral; then it is neither to be wondered nor lamented that they are punished with universal contempt. But the world is prone to be malignantly censorious, and to require a degree of perfection which no mortal can

uniformly display, whatever may be his office, whatever his virtues, and whatever his intentions. Continued and uniform profligacy can scarcely be treated with too much rigour, when it appears in those who have separated themselves to inculcate good precepts, and to exhibit good examples; but when we find ourselves inclined to censure a clergyman for a small fault,

> ——— quam incuria fudit
> Aut humana parum cavit natura. Hor.

and without palpable reasons, let us ask our own hearts, Whether, if we were in his place, we should be able to preserve an unerring rectitude?

I have thus taken the liberty of speaking my sentiments, with a view to vindicate the general character of the clergy. They are, indeed, sufficiently able to defend themselves; but every individual ought to contribute something to the general defence when the attack is general. And I have the rather undertaken this business from a conviction, that, when the clergy are despised, they will degenerate; and that with them will decline the morals, the learning, the religion, the importance, and the happiness of this country.

No. XI.

ON THE TENDENCY OF MORAL PROFLIGACY TO DESTROY CIVIL LIBERTY.

It appears from a review of the world, that wherever man is denied the enjoyment of civil liberty, he not only loses much of his natural happiness, but much also of his natural dignity. His spirit is broken, his sentiments are depraved, and he seems contented to lead a life merely animal. Athens still stands, but where are the Athenians?

It is not, indeed, true that the arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture, cannot flourish in the land of despotism. The productions of these arts contribute

to the pleasure of the luxurious, if they are considered only in the humiliating light of ornamental furniture; they will, therefore, be bought at a hight price; and, where the artist is rewarded amply, ingenuity and manual labour will eagerly co-operate in producing works of imitation. The hope of gain will excite competition; and competition, emulation; and emulation, excellence. Historical facts might be adduced to prove the truth of this theory; for the best productions of art have appeared in the arbitrary governments of Europe, and some of the worst in the republican. Indeed, it is by no means certain, that the imitative arts may not be rendered, by political perversion, subservient to the purposes of introducing despotism. A whole people of Dilettanti are not likely to make a very manly stand against the encroachments of that royal power under which they find their imbecility protected. We shall not easily find a Hampden in a connoisseur. When public places of pleasure multiply in the capital, and the encouragement which should be given to active virtue and to literature is transferred to artists, the jealous guardian of the liberties of his country may justly increase his vigilance. The arts ought to be encouraged; but they ought also to be kept in their proper subordination; for what are they in themselves? After all that the loquacious and conceited pretenders to taste have advanced, they are but means of amusement. They constitute, indeed, a most elegant and delightful amusement; but that which is only an amusement must possess a rank subordinate to those pursuits which tend to give stability to empire, to enlighten the intellects, to reform the morals of the people, and to found political happiness on the broad and massy basis of moral virtue, manly fortitude, and religious confidence.

It is not with the manly virtues as with the polite

arts. If they thrive at all in an arbitrary government, they thrive like exotic plants, which can never possess their native vigour or maturity. But what is life in such circumstances as preclude every generous exertion which can render it rationally valuable? When man is compelled to sleep away his existence, or spend it in a wearisome reiteration of the animal functions, life is not life; and therefore we may conclude, that it is a rational as well as enthusiastic passion which every indepent Englishman feels for liberty.

But liberty is too often misunderstood, and the mistaken ideas of it sometimes endanger its continuance. Vice, also, when it becomes enormous and universal, is inevitably fatal to liberty. I mean, then, to derive an additional argument in favour of virtue from its connexion with liberty, and from its efficacy in giving stability to the political constitution of a free country. And certainly, if the love of our country is so general as the pretensions to it, many who are addicted to libertine practices and principles will be led to encourage, by precept and example, that decency and regularity, that temperance and industry, that religion and fortitude, which constitute a better bulwark against attacks upon our liberty than our boasted fleets and armies. I believe they will find, that the several national vices, which I shall presently enumerate, are peculiarly adverse to the prevalence and permancy of civil freedom.

Without examining the definitions of politicians or logicians, I denominate that a state of liberty in which every man's person, property, and free agency, are secured or circumscribed by laws which have been agreed to by the majority of the people at large, either directly or indirectly; either in their own persons, or by a representation primarily and tacitly, if not expressly, allowed by the people, for the convenience of

public debate; which public debate could never come to a conclusion, if the debating assembly were composed of every individual in an empire. Salutary restraint is, then, the very principle of liberty; and they, who, from their restless dispositions, or from misapprehension, endeavour to throw off every species of coersion, are in reality enemies to that freedom which they pretend to promote.

But of these the number is small, in comparison with others, who, without thinking of consequences which appear to them remote, slide imperceptibly into a conduct, which, though it destroys not the fair fabric of liberty at once and by an assault, gradually saps the firmness of its foundation.

Luxury will always be indulged to excess in a rich and powerful country, abounding with that species of internal and imported commodities which can only be subservient to pleasure and ostentation. Every year brings an increase to luxury; for, as it is founded in a great measure on vanity, the rich will be perpetually seeking distinction. As soon as they have displayed one mode of luxury, it is imitated; and, in order to obtain distinction, another must be adopted; and thus dereliction and adoption are found to proceed in perpetual succession. No fortune can supply unbounded expense; and the consequence is, that the great and noble are soon impoverished; but vanity is, in general, a more powerful principle than patriotism; and, therefore, for the sake of supporting a splendid figure, they who ought to stand up as the guardians of constitutional liberty, become ready to make any sacrifice to a minister in exchange for a lucrative employment. The middle and the lowest ranks follow the example of the nobles, by incurring expenses which neither their patrimonies nor their personal industry can support. They, therefore, become alike dependent, and in the extremities of their

distress are ready to sell their birthright for a mess of pottage. But luxury, by involving all orders in distress, not only deprives them of their independence, but naturally tends to weaken the understandings and vitiate the morals of the people at large: and no weak or bad man can ever entertain a proper love for liberty, or have it in his power to assert it with efficacy, when it is infringed. They who are immersed in voluptuousness, whether of the table or of any grosser kind, will consider liberty and the love of our country as names only fitted to adorn a poem, a romance, or a school-boy's declamation. They who build houses and collect costly pictures and furniture with the money of an honest artisan or mechanic, will be very glad of emancipation from the hands of a bailiff by the sale of their best privileges. Luxury, indeed, disposes to general indolence; and he who is overcome by its deceitful allurements will think it a fortunate exchange to be freed from the noise and turbulence of liberty by the dead repose of established despotism.

Levity, which is indeed intimately allied to luxury, is fatal to liberty. They who resolve never to think seriously, will suffer themselves to be robbed of all that is valuable without reluctance. Nothing can be more remote from levity than the characters of those among the ancients who distinguished themselves as the champions of the natural rights which belong to human nature. The very idea of Brutus, in the dress and with the grimace and the levity of a modern *petit maitre,* and of a Hampden or Sydney who apes the petit maitre, is laughable. Whatever is great and valuable in society, requires spirit and vigilance to perfect and preserve it; for nothing great and valuable is perfected and preserved by chance. But how shall he contribute an adequate share to the common mass of public good in the senate, in the field, on the bench,

in the pulpit, or in the family, whose mind is engrossed by trifles, and who shrinks from all that is serious, as the bane of his fancied felicity? They who have raised an empire have always been grave and severe; they who have ruined it have been uniformly distinguished for their dissipation. It is the predominance of mental strength and the vigour of stern virtue which contribute chiefly to superior strength and prosperity of empire. If it be true, then, that we are adopting the levities of foreign nations which have never known the sweets of liberty; if it be true, that the greater part of the people are for ever in pursuit of dissipating pleasure; if it be true, that our manners are universally trifling and our conversation futile, it is time that those who value liberty should take the alarm, and endeavour to set better examples, lest it should appear, that, amidst all our delights, we are preparing slavery for our children; an idea which ought to imbitter the sweetest of them in the midst of enjoyment.

The want of a liberal and manly education will render us unable to perceive the value of liberty. It will also prevent the acquisition of that dignity and authority of mind which alone can make a successful stand against the encroachments of power. Ignorance is mean, and cannot offer those generous sacrifices which our duty to our country demands when its liberties are endangered. A mind destitute of a proper education will be easily deluded by the sophistical arguments of those, who, to serve selfish purposes, are ready to explain away every dear-bought privilege, with a view to make converts to doctrines detrimental to the rights of mankind. And with respect to those who are educated, indeed, but educated in the manners and sentiments of a despotic government, though they may be descended from Tudors and Plantagenets, yet

their hearts are not English. They consider all our virtues, and all our religious scruples, as insular prejudices; and if Englishmen were to permit them to import their improvements, they would establish a *Grand Monarque*, and show that they think the world was made for dukes, marquisses, lords, and counts, to take their pastime in; and that such *canaille* as the body of English freeholders are only fit to be *cuisiniers* or *perruquiers*, to decorate their apish persons, and tickle their vitiated palates.

It needs no argument to prove, that an inordinate attachment to self-interest, that the excessive love of money, or venality, tends directly to subvert our liberties: for he who is inclined to do any thing to promote his sordid interest, will sell his share of his country's rights as soon as he finds a willing purchaser. When the African prince pronounced that all was venal at Rome, Roman virtue was departed. Liberty would not linger when deserted by Virtue, but left the throne to Despotism, who assumed the imperial purple, and for ages cursed mankind.

An excessive zeal for liberty, like all excessive zeal, injures the cause it means to serve. Faction and sedition disgrace free countries, and introduce such evils as make the lovers of repose almost wish for the tranquillity of despotism. Ebullitions will sometimes arise in a free community, like humours in a healthy body; and when they preserve the limits of moderation, they are to be considered as symptoms of a sound constitution. But when they rise too high, and continue too long, they are like a gangrene, which gradually diffuses itself till it destroys the vitality of the subject from which it originates.

It will, indeed, be found, that all conduct which is extensively injurious to individuals, is ultimately injurious to the body politic. And I hope it will be

adopted as an incontestible truth, that political good, like moral good, when it is solid and substantial, is always the result of an adherence to reason and virtue, prudence and religion.

No. XII.

ON THAT KIND OF WISDOM WHICH CONSISTS IN ACCOMMODATION AND COMPLIANCE, WITHOUT ANY PRINCIPLES BUT THOSE OF SELFISHNESS.

THERE is a mean and sneaking kind of wisdom (I can allow it no better epithets) which marks the present times, and consists in a compliance with the inclinations, and an assent to the opinions, of those with whom we converse, however opposite they may be to our own, or to those we complied with, or assented to, in the last company in which we were engaged. And this cunning and cautious behaviour is honoured with the name of true politeness, good sense, and knowledge of the world; or, to speak in the technical language of fashion, taking the *ton* of our company. When it is closely examined, it appears to originate in timidity, in a mean and excessive regard to self-interest, and to be utterly inconsistent with the principles of honesty. "A person of discretion," says the sensible and satirical Collier, "will take care not to embarrass his life, nor expose himself to calumny, nor let his conscience grow too strong for his interest; he never crosses a prevailing mistake, nor opposes any mischief that has numbers and prescription on its side. His point is to steal upon the blind side, and apply to the affections; to flatter the vanity and play upon the weakness of those in power or interest, and to make his fortune out of the folly of his neighbours."

I venture, however, to affirm, that he who adopts this conduct, however plausible his appearance, however oily his tongue, and specious his professions, is no honest man. *He would not for* the world contradict

you, or in any respect express his disapprobation of your taste or your choice. But why would he not? Is it because he really thinks as you think, and feels as you feel? Impossible. For he will assent to opinions diametrically opposite, as soon as he goes from your door to your next neighbour. Is it because he is so abundantly good-natured as to fear lest he should give you pain by contradiction? Believe it not. It is true, indeed, that he fears to contradict you; but it is only lest he should lose your favour: and it is a maxim with him to court the favour of every individual; because he may one day want his assistance in accomplishing the objects of his covetousness or his ambition. While, therefore, he is entering into your views, approving your taste, confirming your observations, what think you passes in his mind? Himself is the subject of his thoughts; and while you imagine that he is concurring with your opinion, and admiring your judgment, he is only meditating how he may most easily insinuate himself into your favour. Such cautious, timid, subtle men, are very common in the world, and so are highwaymen and pickpockets.

It must be owned, with regret, that this deceitful intercourse is too often the mode of converse among those self-elevated beings who have separated themselves from the rest of mankind, under the name of People of Fashion. Among these empty dictators of external forms you must learn to take the tone of every body with whom you converse, except, indeed, of the vulgar. With the grave you must be grave; with the gay you must be gay; with the vicious you must be vicious; with the good and learned, as good and learned as the best of them, if you can; but if you are not quite adept enough in dissimulation to have attained this excellence, it is safest to keep out of their way; for they are apt to speak disagreable truths, and to be quite insufferable *bêtes*. This versatility and duplicity of the

grand monde may, indeed, constitute a man of the world; but let it be remembered, that a book of some authority classes the world, when spoken of in this sense, with the devil.

The over-cautious wise men of these times are very fond of getting into the company of an honest man; when, by throwing out leading ideas, or by asking insidious questions, they contrive to learn all his sentiments without uttering an opinion of their own. I have known some of these close gentlemen of the *volto sciolto* and the *pensieri stretti* so reserved and mysterious, and, at the same time, so inquisitive, that you would have imagined them commissioned spies of an enemy's country, or members of the privy council at home. If, after you have opened yourself, you ask their opinion, they answer, That really they do not know what to say, they have not quite made up their minds on the subject; some people, they find, think one way, and some another. With respect to themselves, they hint that though they were at first very doubtful, yet your arguments seem almost to have made them converts to your opinions; and, whatever the event may be, you have fully proved that reason is of your side; or, if it is not, you have shown amazing ingenuity and abilities in saying so much on a side which cannot be defended. Then, after having gained their point of sounding your sentiments, the conversation turns to the topics of the weather or the wind.

They display a most outrageous affectation of candour. They are always ready to make allowances for the infirmities of human nature, except when a rival, or an object of their hatred, is to be injured; and then, though it is not their disposition to be censorious, though it is well-known they always palliate what they can, yet, in this particular case, they will whisper, what they would not speak aloud, nor have go any farther;

they will whisper, that they believe the report, however injurious, to be strictly true, and, indeed, rather a favourable account; for if you knew as much as they do, they insinuate that you would be shocked indeed: but, however, they declare they will not in candour disclose what they know. So that we may conclude, as indeed is often the case, that badness of heart is united with pusillanimity. They are affectedly kind when their selfish views are to be promoted by kindness, but really and most implacably malevolent when the same purposes are more effectually served by malevolence, or when they have an opportunity of gratifying their envy or revenge.

Where compliance and assent, caution and candour, arise from a natural tenderness of disposition and softness of nature, they are amiable and respectable, but as the effects of artifice they must be despised. The persons who falsely pretend to them are, indeed, often themselves dupes of their own deceit, when they imagine others are deluded by it. For excessive art always betrays itself; and many, who, from motives of delicacy and tenderness, do not openly rebuke the deceiver, secretly deride and warmly resent his ineffectual subtilty. Cunning people are apt, as it has been well observed, to entertain too mean an opinion of the intellects of those with whom they converse, and to suppose that they can be moved like puppets by secret wires well managed behind the curtain. But the puppets are often refractory, and the spectators, on whom the awkward experiment of delusion has been tried, always displeased.

Lucrative views are the usual motives which allure the sycophant to his mean submissions. But where lucrative views are greatly predominant, a truly respectable man is seldom found. Covetousness is so greedy a passion, that it not only attracts to itself its proper

objects, but swallows up almost every other affection. Man, indeed is naturally and properly attached to himself in a certain degree; but a liberal education, united to a good nature, corrects the excess of selfishness, and enables us to find enjoyment in many pursuits which are conducive to the good of society. But when all is made to concentre in self, and when the mind is so contracted as to see no good but lucre, it brings its proper punishment, by a voluntary condemnation of itself to a slavish, a timid, and an anxious existence. So that the contemptible characters which I have been describing are, in truth, enemies to self, even when they are exclusively devoted to it.

There are others who adopt the pusillanimity of mean compliance and servile assent, from a wish to pass quietly and smoothly through life, without the asperities or noise of opposition. This wish, however amiable and laudable, may certainly lead to excessive and unmanly obsequiousness. Every man is bound by his religion, and by his regard to himself, his family, and his country, to seek peace. But it will not be secured by unmanly submissions. A proper degree of spirit and courage is as necessary to preserve tranquillity as a pacific disposition. Internal peace is infinitely more valuable than external; but he who is always afraid to avow his sentiments, and is led into the mazes of deceit and duplicity, will feel, amid his fears and his contrivances, that his bosom is agitated with emotions by no means tranquil and serene. Add to this, that the spiritless servility of a mean but fashionable time-server will often invite, as it will always deserve, contempt.

In truth, every sensible man must form opinions on every thing which presents itself, and every honest man dares to avow them, when there is no evident and honourable reason for their concealment. If a man has formed virtuous, religious, and patriotic principles, he

injures all those causes which he must wish to serve, by fearing to declare openly, on proper occasions, his inward conviction. It is, indeed, his duty to do so; for it is a part of virtue to add confidence to the virtuous, by boldly professing a wish to be of the number, and by standing forward their avowed auxiliary.

But that wisdom, which consists in political compliance, without regard to antiquated notions of moral fitness or unfitness, is no less visible in public than in private life. It is not always the honest and upright, whose heart is as open as his countenance, that is judged worthy of great offices and employments. It is more frequently the varnished character, which, while it holds out the best professions, is capable of co-operating in all the mean artifices, which are often, according to the narrow system of worldly politics, politically necessary. In many employments of state, he who cannot meanly submit to time-serving will not be able to serve himself, nor permitted to serve his country.

In public measures, particularly those which concern religion, for instance, it is insinuated, that not what is strictly and morally right, or strictly and morally wrong, is to be considered, so much as what is seasonable, what the times and the present system of manners will conveniently bear. At one time, popery is to be encouraged, because we are threatened with an invasion, and the papists are a numerous and rich body, capable of greatly assisting us as friends, or annoying us as enemies. At another time, popery is to be discountenanced by writings, by laws, by axes, and by faggots. At one time, Christianity is to be propagated by missionaries wherever we make a discovery; at another, we are to visit and revisit the isles of the Southern ocean, and not a wish be expressed by the rulers, civil or ecclesiastic, for the conversion of the poor Otaheiteans and Ulieteans. At one time eccle-

siastics shall rule the nation; and, at another, not be permitted to share the least authority. The times will not bear ecclesiastical interference, and therefore the spiritual lords shall sit and hear the insults of a graceless peer, or see laws enacted which affect the Protestant religion, or the general state of national manners and ecclesiastical establishments, in silent acquiescence, as if they were the novices of a Pythagoras, instead of men commissioned by the awful sanction of Jesus Christ, and the laws of their country. They content themselves with the practice of moderation; but there are circumstances in which forbearance becomes treachery and cowardice. They urge, that the times will not bear ecclesiastical authority. Now who is it who makes the times what they are? Even those, whose excessive caution and cowardly policy leave a doubt on the minds of the many, whether that zeal is not totally deficient which is the genuine result of sincerity.

I have no doubt, but that both the civil and ecclesiastical departments of the state would flourish more if that conduct were followed in their support which shines openly in the eyes of mankind as the result of truth and honesty, than when those petty tricks and that temporising management are pursued, which lead the governed to despise the persons, and to disobey the authority of the governor. Let legal authority openly dictate what is right, when measured by the great eternal standard of truth and justice, and then let legal power enforce the practice. The times would then be conformed to the rulers, and not the rulers, by a strange perversion, to the obliquity of the times.

No. XIII.

A PRUDENT AND ELEGANT CHARACTER EXEMPLIFIED IN THAT OF ATTICUS.

Few among the ancient Romans have approached so nearly to a perfect character as Atticus. To the

noblest instances of exalted wisdom and liberality he added a peculiar elegance of life.

But his reputation has of late been sullied by detraction. The Abbé St. Real, in the wantonness of idle ingenuity, has attempted to derogate from his character, by disputing the veracity of his biographer, Cornelius Nepos. Unfortunately for St. Real, the principal passage he has quoted from Cicero to convict the historian of falsehood is manifestly corrupt; and, when restored to its obvious sense, proves nothing to the purpose, as is shown by the elegant Melmoth, in his agreeable remarks on Cicero's Essay on Old Age. The Abbé, however, takes upon him to represent this amiable man as a time-server and an artful politician, whose wisdom consisted in little else than a sagacious attention to his personal safety.

The penetrating Middleton has also spoken less favourably of the friend of Cicero than might have been expected. He insinuates, that his Epicurean principles taught him a selfish caution, totally incompatible with the cordiality of friendship. To this prudent, though not very honourable, self-regard, he attributes it, that not one letter of Atticus was published, though not fewer than sixteen books of Cicero to Atticus have descended to posterity.

There is, it must be owned, on a slight review, a great appearance of insincerity in the conduct of Atticus. But St. Real has too hastily rejected the honourable testimony which Nepos has borne in his favour; and Middleton seems to have been too much prejudiced against him, by a single passage of Seneca. Seneca asserted, that if Cicero had not drawn Atticus into notice, he would have remained unknown. This, however, may be true, without diminishing his merit. How could he have come down to posterity, but together with the fame of his illustrious friend; since he

took not that active part in politics which gives men a place in the page of history, and erected no literary monument for the preservation of his own glory?

If, therefore, the character of his contemporary, Cornelius Nepos, is established as an historian, the fame of Atticus remains undiminished by the cavils of modern inquirers.

In answer to the calumny, that Nepos was a mean writer, and little regarded by his own age, it must be affirmed that he was, as we are told by Gellius, the familiar friend of Cicero. It is said, also, that a statue was erected to him by his countrymen of Verona. If there are defects in any of the writings that pass under his name, they are attributed to the interpolations of Æmilius Probus. His Atticus is allowed to be his own, and a masterpiece of sweet and polished composition. Cicero speaks highly of him, and he is particularly honoured by Catullus and both the Plinies. He lived at the same time with Atticus; and, had he asserted any notorious untruth, would soon have been refuted by the general voice of living witnesses, who are seldom disposed to be rashly credulous to the voice of praise.

But, setting aside authority, it may be said, that the uncontroverted matter of fact, the intimate connexion of Atticus with opposite parties, with Cæsar and with Pompey, with Antony and with Brutus, with Cicero, Clodius, and Hortensius, is a proof of uncommon management or duplicity. From this fact, however, I would deduce a different inference. His friendship with the greatest men of his times, whatever were their political divisions, does honour both to his moderation and integrity. Had he concerned himself with faction, no cunning could have secured him from the hatred of some of the parties, and a subsequent proscription. Had he been a mean, base, selfish time-server, he would

have been despised by all. They who differed in every thing else would have agreed in exposing one whose villany deserved contempt, and whose influence was not great enough to justify connivance. The truth seems to be, that he was superior to the little views of party. His general philanthropy was stronger than his particular attachments, and in his warm regard for the excellence of his friends, he overlooked the failings that caused their animosity. Though he lived at a distance from the capital, and chose not to exert his influence, if he possessed any, yet such was his personal dignity, that, in his intercourse with Cicero and the greatest men of his times, he never appeared in the light of an inferior. They seem, indeed, to have treated him with unusual deference, and he appears to have possessed that true dignity which results from real wisdom and virtue, and which no artifice or external ostentation can produce.

That he cultivated a friendship with them, and did them every good office which humanity directed by judgment could suggest, is true. But we have it on record, that he courted not the fortunate alone. To those who wanted his assistance, and were least likely to repay it, he was most ready to afford it. He protected the wife and family of Antony when reduced to ruin, and he transmitted pecuniary presents to Brutus, when Brutus was involved in the distresses of indigence.

Devoted to letters, and to all the studies that refine and elevate the liberal mind, he was idolized at Athens, where he found a sweet asylum from the tumult of faction. His situation in this place was truly enviable. In the centre of taste and learning, with a discernment that enabled him to select and relish the best productions, beloved by all around, and even courted by the great, he spent his time at Athens in all the elegant

tranquillity of the refined Epicurus. His departure from it was publicly lamented, and the regret of that discerning people reflects an honour on him far greater than an ovation.

Though a man of taste, of letters, of important connexions, he was yet enabled to give attention to domestic œconomy. His family regulations were peculiar indeed, but such as became a philosopher. All his servants were qualified to read to him, and to perform the office of an amanuensis. He was elegant, says Nepos, not magnificent; splendid, not profuse. The unaffected beauty of delicate neatness was his object, rather than the ostentation of opulence.

A very distinguished and honourable part of his character was his utter detestation of deceit. He abhorred a lie: a circumstance which renders the charge of duplicity improbable. That he appeared little affected with his friend Cicero's misfortunes, is not so much to be attributed to insincerity, as to some conduct apparently weak in Cicero himself. And perhaps Cicero complained of it without sufficient reason; for adversity is querulous.

The goodness of his disposition was displayed in the constancy of his attachments, and in the delight he felt in acts of beneficence; but it shone no where more amiably than in his behaviour as a son and a brother. His mother lived to the age of ninety; and he used to mention, with pleasure, that the harmony which subsisted between them was never interrupted by one moment's disagreement. He gloried also in living on the most affectionate terms with his sister.

He died in a good old age. But it is to be lamented that, after a long life, as perfect as reason unassisted could render it, he precipitated his death by refusing sustenance, in order to avoid the recurrence of a painful disease. He acted consistently with the principles

of Epicurus, who taught that pain was the greatest evil. A mind like his would have been the first to have refuted such errors, had he lived in a later age, and been the disciple of a greater than Epicurus.

Delineated by the pencil of Cornelius Nepos, he shines forth a beautiful portrait. Nor can I discover the utility of those minute inquiries which tend to lower an elevated character. The more examples of human excellence, the more honourable and advantageous to human nature. Truth, indeed, in all cases, should be carefully investigated; but when it already appears established on the side of virtue, that restlessness of learned research, which seeks to sap its foundation, is not only impertinent, but mischievous, and therefore criminal.

No. XIV.

ON NOVEL-READING.

If it be true that the present age is more corrupt than the preceding, the great multiplication of Novels has probably contributed to its degeneracy. In the middle of the last century there was scarcely a Novel in the kingdom. Romances, indeed, abounded; but they, it is supposed, were rather favourable to virtue. Their pictures of human nature were not, indeed, exact, but they were flattering resemblances. By exhibiting patterns of perfection, they stimulated emulation to aim at it. They led the fancy through a beautiful wilderness of delights, and they filled the heart with pure, manly, bold, and liberal sentiments.

Those books, also, which were written with a view to ridicule the more absurd romantic writers, are themselves most pleasing romances, and may be read without injury to the morals. Such is the immortal work of Cervantes. Perhaps the safest books of entertainment for young people are those of decent

humour, which excite a laugh, and leave the heart little affected.

Books are more read in youth than in the advanced periods of life; but there are few perfectly well adapted to the young mind. They should be entertaining, or they will not be attended to. They should not be profound, for they will not be understood. Entertaining books there are in great numbers; but they were not written solely for young people, and are therefore too unguarded in many of their representations. They do not pay that reverence which Juvenal asserts to be due to the puerile age.

That Richardson's Novels are written with the purest intentions of promoting virtue, none can deny. But in the accomplishment of this purpose scenes are laid open which it would be safer to conceal, and sentiments excited which it would be more advantageous to early virtue not to admit. Dangers and temptations are pointed out; but many of them are dangers which seldom occur, and temptations by which few in comparison are assaulted. It is to be feared the moral view is rarely regarded by youthful and inexperienced readers, who naturally pay the chief attention to the lively description of love and its effects; and who, while they read the amorous tale, eagerly wish to be actors in the scenes which they admire.

The cultivated genius of Fielding entitles him to a high rank among the classics. His works exhibit a series of pictures drawn with all the descriptive fidelity of a Hogarth. They are highly entertaining, and will always be read with pleasure; but they likewise disclose scenes which may corrupt a mind unseasoned by experience.

Smollett, undoubtedly, possessed great merit. He would, however, have been more generally read among the polite and refined, if his humour had been less

coarse. His Peregrine Pickle has, I am convinced, done much mischief, as all books must do in which wicked characters are painted in captivating colours. It is certainly advisable to defer the perusal of his works till the judgment is mature.

The writings of all such men display, however, the beauties of that genius which allures and rewards the attention of the discreet reader. But the memoirs, private histories, and curious anecdotes, imported from our neighbouring land of libertinism, have seldom any thing to recommend them to perusal but their profligacy. Yet even these, adorned with specious titles, and a pert vivacity of language, have found their way to the circulating libraries, and are often obtruded on the attention at an early age.

The English press has teemed with similar original productions. The coarse taste which was introduced in the reign of Charles the Second was greedily adopted by the juvenile reader. At an inflammatory age the fuel of licentious ideas will always find a ready reception. The sentimental manners seems of late to have supplanted it. But it is matter of doubt, whether even this manner be not equally dangerous. It has given an amiable name to vice, and has obliquely excused the extravagance of the passions, by representing them as the effect of lovely sensibility. The least refined affections of humanity have lost their indelicate nature, in the ideas of many, when dignified by the epithet of sentimental; and trangressions forbidden by the laws of God and man have been absurdly palliated, as proceeding from an excess of those finer feelings, which Vanity has arrogated to herself as elegant and amiable distinctions. A softened appellation has given a degree of gracefulness to moral deformity.

The languishing and affectedly sentimental compositions formed on the pattern of Sterne, and of other

less original Novelists, not only tend to give the mind a degree of weakness which renders it unable to resist the slightest impulse of libidinous passion, but also indirectly insinuate that the attempt is unnatural. What, then, remains to support the feeble efforts of remaining virtue, but the absence of temptation?

Such books, however pernicious their tendency, are the most easily obtained. The prudence of their publishers suggests the expediency of making them conveniently portable. Every corner of the kingdom is abundantly supplied with them. In vain is youth secluded from the corruptions of the living world. Books are commonly allowed them, with little restriction, as innocent amusements; yet these often pollute the heart in the recesses of the closet, inflame the passions at a distance from temptation, and teach all the malignity of vice in solitude.

There is another evil arising from a too early attention to Novels. They fix attention so deeply, and afford so lively a pleasure, that the mind once accustomed to them cannot submit to the painful task of serious study. Authentic history becomes insipid. The reserved graces of the chaste matron Truth are suffered to pass unobserved, amidst the gaudy and painted decorations of meretricious fiction. The boy who can procure a variety of books like Gil Blas and the Devil upon Two Sticks, will no longer find entertainment in his Livy, his Sallust, his Homer, or his Virgil. He will not study old Lilly while he can read Pamela and Tom Jones, and a thousand inferior and more dangerous Novels, which are easily procured in every town throughout this kingdom.

When the judgment is ripened by reflection, and the morals out of danger, every well-written book will claim attention. The man of application may always find agreeable refreshment, after severe study, in the

amusing pages of a Fielding; but the fungous production of the common Novel-wright will be too insignificant to attract his notice.

The extreme insipidity of some of our later Novels, it might have been supposed, would have prevented their reception. But effeminate minds find in them entertainment congenial to their nature. And, indeed, the futility of many modern Novels almost precludes their power of causing any other mischief than the consumption of time that might be more usefully employed.

If, however, Novels are to be prohibited, in what, it will be asked, can the young mind employ itself during the hours of necessary leisure? To this it may be answered, that, when the sweetened poison is removed, plain and wholesome food will always be relished. The growing mind will crave nourishment, and will gladly seek it in true histories, written in a pleasing and easy style on purpose for its use. Voyages and travels, when not obscured by scientific observations, are always delightful to youthful curiosity. From interesting narratives, like those of Telemachus and Robinson Crusoe, a mind not vitiated by a taste for licentious Novels will derive a very exalted pleasure. Let the boy's library consist of such books as Rollin's History, Plutarch's Lives, and the Spectators; and, together with the improvement of his morals and understanding which he must derive from reading them, he will have it in his power to spend his vacant time in such mental amusements as are truly and permanently delightful.

No. XV.

ON SIMPLICITY OF STYLE IN PROSAIC COMPOSITION.

Food that gives the liveliest pleasure on the first taste, frequently disgusts on repetition; and those things

which please the palate without satiety, are such as please but moderately, and perhaps originally caused a disagreeable sensation. Mental food is also found by experience to nourish most, and delight the longest, when it is not lusciously sweet. Profuse ornament and unnecessary graces, though they may transport the reader on a first perusal, commonly occasion a kind of intellectual surfeit, which prevents a second.

Immoderate embellishment is the mark of a puerile taste, of a weak judgment, and a little genius. It conveys the idea of too great a labour to please; an idea which excludes the appearance of ease, without which it is difficult to effect the purpose of pleasing. If the reader enters into the author's spirit, he finds his emotions too rapidly excited to be consistent with pleasurable feelings. Works acknowledged to be written with true taste, are found for the most part to raise gentle emotions; and, when it is necessary to excite the more violent, the effect is improved from the rarity of the attempt. There is a certain equable flow of spirits, which keeps the mind in a tone for the admission of durable pleasure, but which, when hurried or exalted beyond its natural state, terminates in disgust.

Several books, very popular in the present age among the youthful and the inexperienced, have a sweetness that palls on the taste, and a grandeur that swells to a bloated turgidity. Such are the writings of some modern Germans. The death of Abel is generally read, and preferred by many to all the productions of Greece, Rome, and England. The success of this work has given rise to others on the same plan; inferior to this in real merit, and labouring under the same fault of redundant decoration. What others may feel, I know not; but I would no more be obliged to read the works of Gesner repeatedly, as they appear in the

English translations, then to make a frequent meal on the honey-comb.

The Meditations of Harvey, and many books of devotion, are written in that inflated style, which wearies by its constant efforts to elevate the mind to ecstasy. They have, it is true, an useful effect on the rude and uncultivated, whose understandings are seldom penetrated but by forcible impressions; but the pleasure they give is not sufficiently elegant and refined to attach the more polished reader who possesses taste.

Poetical prose, as all such writings may be called, seems indeed by no means correspondent to classical ideas of beauty. There is no model of it among writers in the golden ages, and it has seldom been attempted by the first rank of moderns. Fenelon, indeed, succeeded in it, but he richly intermixed the beautiful flowers originally culled by Homer and Virgil. Genius like his, assisted by classical learning, may give a grace to compositions formed on plans not quite conformable to the most approved archetype.

Many modern sermons, while their authors aimed at sublimity, and a highly figurative eloquence, have become turgid and affected. The simple majesty of the sacred writings affords a proper model for sacred oratory; and it must be owned, to the honour of the regular clergy, that they have commonly imitated it; and that the enthusiastic and pompous harangue has usually been the production of those who have renounced reason in matters of taste as well as of religion. Addressed to the meanest capacities in the lowest orders, it may have produced a desirable effect in compelling their attention, and in warming their inflammable passions. But, it is to be feared, its effect was but temporary, and it is certain that it can never possess a place among the elegant works of literature.

It is agreeable to the mind to be occasionally roused by a powerful stroke; but it suffers a kind of smart from a continual repetition of the blow. It is merely wearied by the feeble yet uninterrupted attacks of the unskilful writer, who mistakes the itch of scribbling for the impulse of genius, and animal vivacity for eloquence.

The Bible, the Iliad, and Shakepeare's works, are allowed to be the sublimest books that the world can exhibit. They are also truly simple; and the reader is the more affected by their indisputable sublimity, because his attention is not fatigued with ineffectual attempts to attain it. He who is acquainted with Longinus will remember, that the instances adduced by that great pattern of the excellence he describes are not remarkable for a glaring or a pompous style, but derive their claim to sublimity from a noble energy of thought, modestly decorated by a proper and natural expression.

Few authors have been more approved by the best judges than Xenophon. Yet his writings display no appearance of splendour or majesty; nothing elevated or adorned with figures; no affectation of ambitious ornament. His merit is an unaffected sweetness, which no affectation can obtain. The graces seem to have conspired to form the becoming texture of his composition. And yet, perhaps, a common reader would neglect him, because the easy and natural air of his narrative rouses no violent emotion. More refined understandings peruse him with delight; and Cicero has recorded, that Scipio, when once he had opened the books of Xenophon, could with difficulty be prevailed with to close them. His style, says the same great orator and critic, is sweeter than honey, and the muses themselves seem to have spoken from his lips.

Julius Cæsar is thought to have resembled Xeno-

phon in his style, as he did in the circumstance of profession. He has nothing florid or grand, but, like a gentle river, flows on with a surface unruffled. A wonderful instance of moderation, to have recounted his own achievements with accuracy, yet without being, for a moment, betrayed into an unbecoming pomp, either of diction or representation. Yet, with all the gracefulness of modesty and simplicity, he has an air of grandeur that commands respect. In comparison with his majestic air, ostentatious ornament would have been contemptible deformity.

Cicero, who understood and valued the simplicity of Xenophon, was, however, himself sometimes guilty of deviating from it. He adopted the Asiatic manner in some of his orations, and they are often more verbose, diffuse, and affected, than an Attic taste can patiently endure. But it is a kind of sacrilege, as well as presumption, to detract from the deserved glory of a man, who, in his life and writings, advanced human nature to high perfection.

The French nation was an affected nation; but many of its authors have written with remarkable simplicity. Fontaine, among others, is acknowledged to have equalled, in this beauty, the ancient models. But they have writers of the other kind; and, I must own, I never could admire many of their boasted orators. Even their Bossuet, their Bourdaloue, and their Massillon, are not adapted to the taste of an English or an Attic audience.

Simplicity is not in general the distinguishing beauty of English writers. Their spirit, their dignity, and their seriousness of disposition, have sometimes given their writings an ill-placed pomp and a false magnificence. But the works of an Addison and a Sterne, and the reception they have met with, will vindicate the nation from the charge of wanting taste for simple

beauty. The ancients have been much imitated in England; and where this is the case, a taste for simplicity will of necessity supersede the remains of Gothicism. The German manner, if we may judge of it from translations, it is hoped, will never supplant the Attic.

To write in a plain style appears easy in theory; but how few in comparison have avoided the fault of unnecessary and false ornament? The greater part seem to have mistaken unwieldy corpulence for robust vigour, and to have despised as meagerness the temperate habit of sound health. The taste for finery is more general than for symmetrical beauty or chaste elegance; and many, like Nero, would not be content till they should have spoiled, by gilding it, the statue of a Lysippus.

No. XVI.

ON THE PREVALENCE OF SCEPTICISM IN RELIGION.

Of all the methods which the vanity of man has devised with a view to acquire distinction, there is none easier than that of professing a disbelief of the established religion. That which shocks the feelings of those with whom we converse, cannot fail of attracting notice; and as the vain are usually confident, they utter their doubts with an air so oracular and decisive, as induces the simple to think them profoundly wise. Audacity, with little ingenuity, will attract attention, and this will sufficiently answer the purpose of many among the professed unbelievers. One might be diverted, if one were not hurt, at seeing a circle of silly admirers, gaping and fixing their eyes on some half-learned and impudent prater, who throws out oblique insinuations against the Bible, the clergy, or the sacrament. These are fertile topics of wit and ingenuity; but it might mortify the vanity of some very vain writers and talkers, if they were to recollect, what is

undoubtedly true, that it is a species of wit and ingenuity which not only the vilest, but the most stupid and illiterate of mankind have frequently displayed in all its possible perfection.

There is, indeed, no doubt but that vanity is one of the principal causes of infidelity. It must be the sole cause of communicating it to others, by writing or conversation. For let us suppose the case of a very humane, judicious, and learned man, entertaining doubts of the truth of Christianity: if he cannot clear his doubts by examination, he will yet recollect that doubts are no certainties; and, before he endeavours to propagate his scepticism, he will ask himself these questions: Am I quite convinced that what I doubt of cannot possibly be true? If I am convinced of it, am I sure that the publication of my opinions will not do more harm than good? Is not the disturbing of any long-established civil constitution attended with confusion, rebellion, bloodshed, and ruin? And are not the majority of men more strongly attached to the religion than the government of their forefathers? Will it serve my country to introduce discontent of any species? May not these innovations in religion, which discontent may introduce, lead to all the evils which are caused by phrensy and fanaticism? Granting that I were able to make a party formidable enough to crush opposition and to exterminate Christianity, still am I certain that I act, in this instance, like a good member of society? For is not this system, whether well or ill founded, friendly to society? I must confess it; its greatest enemies have acknowledged it. What motive, then, can induce me to divulge my doubts of its authenticity? Not the good of mankind; for it is already allowed by unbelievers, that the good of mankind is interested in the belief of its divine original. Is it for my own good, and with a view to be convinced? I will not deceive myself: my

motive, I suspect, is of another kind; for do I read those books which have been already written to satisfy similar doubts? Nothing but the vanity of appearing to be wiser than my credulous neighbours can induce me to interrupt the happiness of their belief. But vanity of this sort, which tends to disturb society, to injure the national morals, and to rob many thousand individuals of a copious source of sweet and solid comfort, must be pronounced extreme wickedness, according to the obvious dictates even of natural religion. I shall act the part of a good citizen and a good man by conforming to a system whose beneficial influence I feel and confess; and by endeavouring to acquire a belief in that which has, for so many centuries, been established, and which promises to sooth me in distress with the sweetest consolations, and to brighten the dismal hour of death by the hope of a more glorious and happy state of existence. At all events, I shall have the satisfaction of having commanded myself so far, as not to have run the hazard of endangering the welfare of my fellow-creatures, either here or hereafter, by indulging a degree of vanity, which, in a creature so weak and so short-lived as myself, is a folly very inconsistent with the superior wisdom which I seem to arrogate.

I will venture to repeat, that all writers against Christianity, however they may affect even the extremes of benevolence, honour, philosophy, and enlargement of mind, are actuated by vanity and wickedness of heart. Their motives are as mean, selfish, narrow, and in every respect unjustifiable, as the tendency of their writings is mischievous. Their malice is often impotent, through the foolish sophistry of their arguments; but, if ever it be successful, it is highly injurious: and, indeed, considering their motives, and the probable consequences of their endeavours, the infidel writer is a greater

enemy to society, and consequently guiltier, according to all the principles of social union, than the thief or the traitor. Persecution would, however, only promote his cause, and his proper punishment is contempt.

It is certainly no derogation from the character of a man of sense, to conform, even while he is so unfortunate as to doubt their truth, to the opinions of his country. His conformity will probably lead him to a train of actions and of thought which, in due time, will induce him to believe. But, if that should not happen, yet he will act as very wise and very great men have acted, in paying a respectful deference to the avowed conviction of others. The most intelligent and powerful men of ancient Rome not only appeared to believe a very absurd and hurtful system, but assisted in all its ceremonies as priests. Even Socrates, who evidently entertained some right notions of the dignity of the one great and supreme Being, yet thought it was a duty which he owed to his country so far to conform to the wretched establishment, as to order, in his dying words, a sacrifice to Æsculapius. This external conformity to the national religion ought not to be confounded with hypocrisy. If, indeed, it be carried to extremes or zealously affected, it certainly is very blameable and contemptible deceit; but while it keeps within the bounds of reason and moderation, it ought to be called a decent deference to the opinions of the majority, arising from humility, and from a desire to maintain the tranquillity of the state, and to continue an innocent and useful system, which has and will always greatly contribute to diminish moral and natural evil.

The easiest, after all, or at least the most effectual method of appearing in any character, is, really to be what we wish to appear. But belief, you will say, is not in our power, and how can we believe what appears to us incredible? Certainly you cannot, while it ap-

pears incredible. But let me ask you, whether you have taken any pains to believe, or have at once and at a glance persuaded yourself that the Christian religion is totally false. I am of opinion, that a great number of sceptical writers never gave themselves the trouble to read those Scriptures which they warmly oppose. They hear objections, they read objections, and they find that the objections often originate from men of reputed wit and ingenuity. They also wish to be reputed men of wit and ingenuity, and, therefore, eagerly adopt the language and sentiments of the order. Perhaps the vanity and pride of this class of men will render all attempts to convince them abortive; but to modest doubters, and to those whose good sense and good dispositions lead them to wish to adopt the religion of their country, it may not be useless to suggest advice, with a view to facilitate their conviction.

The chief thing required is to free themselves from the pride of human reason. Humility (and surely our blindness and imperfections are sufficient to render us humble if we would be reasonable), humility will open our hearts, and belief will find admission. Sincere endeavours, seconded by prayers, will never fail to help our unbelief. But alas! a fine, gay, spirited, liberal, and enlarged modern philosopher would be ashamed to be found on his knees, or with a Testament on his table. There is scarcely any vicious act, or any vicious book, which would put him so much to the blush.

A modest well-meaning man might, however, I should think, divest himself of those prejudices which prevent the possibility of belief by the following soliloquy: "I find myself placed in a world abounding with evil and misery. Under the immediate pressure of it, I feel my heart inclining, like the needle to the north, by its natural tendency, to the Deity for support. Man, of all animals, is the only one who has the sense

of religion. Feeling this distinctive propensity of my nature, I look around to discover to what object, and in what manner, that part of my fellow-creatures who live in the same society with myself, pay their adoration. I find a system of religion already established, and which has been established in the most enlightened countries of the earth, near two thousand years. I resolve to examine it. It claims that respect from its antiquity and diffusion. Many difficulties, indeed, appear at first sight. My reason is often startled, and my belief wavers. But I will not yet give up a point of so serious importance without further and closer attention to it. I reflect, that two thousand years is a vast space in the age of the world. How many myriads of men like myself have lived and died in the faith during that time! And were all of them fools or hypocrites? It could not have been. Can the understanding of a poor individual just come into the world, and hardly knowing where he is, comprehend on intuition an object of such magnitude, and make the mighty discovery, which has escaped millions of the wisest and most learned of mortals? Or, supposing that they all perceived the deception, am I, then, at last, the only honest man who will confess it? I am ashamed to avow such an idea to myself. But yet, if I reject what they received, surely I avow it in the more expressive language of my conduct. Pride, I fear, is the foundation of my scepticism; and humility must form the basis of my belief. I will check my own presumption, and reject the cavils of vain and foolish philosophy. Shall a poor weak creature, who cometh up like a flower, and is cut down, who fleeth as a shadow, and never continueth in one stay, presume to pronounce decisively in that little period, in which he has scarcely time to look about him before he dies, against a system which has strong internal and external evidence of divine

original, which is most useful and comfortable, and which has been admitted among a great portion of mankind during almost twenty centuries? No; it is the first wisdom to be humble. Humility will be followed by grace, and grace by faith, and faith by salvation. It plainly appears, that I can lose nothing by belief, but some of those excessive and irregular enjoyments which would destroy my health and life; but I may possibly gain a glory and a happiness which shall continue to all eternity."

No. XVII.

FAMILY DISAGREEMENTS THE FREQUENT CAUSE OF IMMORAL CONDUCT.

After all our complaints of the uncertainty of human affairs, it is undoubtedly true, that more misery is produced among us by the irregularities of our tempers than by real misfortunes.

And it is a circumstance particularly unhappy, that these irregularities of the temper are most apt to display themselves at our fire-sides, where every thing ought to be tranquil and serene. But the truth is, we are awed by the presence of strangers, and are afraid of appearing weak or ill-natured when we act in the sight of the world; and so, very heroically, reserve all our ill-humour for our wives, children, and servants. We are meek where we might meet with opposition, but feel ourselves undauntedly bold where we are sure of no effectual resistance.

The perversion of the best things converts them to the worst. Home is certainly well adapted to repose and solid enjoyment. Among parents and brothers, and all the tender charities of private life, the gentler affections, which are always attended with feelings purely and permanently pleasurable, find an ample scope for proper exertion. The experienced have often

declared, after wearying themselves in pursuing phantoms, that they have found a substantial happiness in the domestic circle. Hither they have returned from their wild excursions in the regions of dissipation; as the bird, after fluttering in the air, descends into her nest to partake and to increase its genial warmth with her young ones.

Such and so sweet are the comforts of home, when it is not perverted by the folly and weakness of man. Indifference, and a carelessness on the subject of pleasing those whom it is our best interest to please, often render it a scene of dulness and insipidity. Happy if the evil extended no further. But the transition from the negative state of not being pleased to positive ill-humour, is but too easy. Fretfulness and peevishness arise, as nettles vegetate, spontaneously, where no salutary plants are cultivated. One unkind expression infallibly generates many others. Trifles light as air are able to kindle the blaze of contention. By frequent conflicts and unreserved familiarity, all that mutual respect which is necessary to preserve love, even in the most intimate connexions, is entirely lost, and the faint affection which remains is too feeble to be felt amid the furious operation of the hateful passions. Farewel peace, and tranquillity, and cheerful converse, and all the boasted comforts of the family circle. The nest which should preserve a perpetual warmth by the constancy of paternal and conjugal affection is rendered cold and joyless. In the place of the soft down which should cover it, are substituted thorns and briars. The waters of strife, to make use of the beautiful allusion of Scripture, rush in with impetuous violence, and ruffle and discolour that stream, which, in its natural and undisturbed current, devolves its waters all smooth and limpid.

But it is not necessary to expatiate on the misery of family dissension. I mean more particularly to suggest,

that family dissension, besides all its own immediate evils, is the fruitful parent of immoral conduct, of vice as well as misfortune.

When the several parts which compose a family find themselves uneasy in that home which is naturally the seat of mutual enjoyment, they are tempted from the straight road of common prudence to pursue their happiness through a devious wild of passion and imagination. The son, arrived at years of maturity, who is treated harshly at home, will seldom spend his evenings at the domestic fire-side. If he lives in the metropolis, he will fly for refuge to the places of public diversion. There, it is very probable, some unhappy connexion will be formed, which cannot be continued without a plentiful supply of money. Perhaps money cannot be procured honestly but from the parent; but money must at all events be procured. What, then, remains but to pursue those methods which unprincipled ingenuity has invented, and which, sooner or later, lead to their condign punishments, pain, shame, and death?

But though the consequences are not always such as the operation of human laws produces, yet they are always terrible, and destructive of happiness and virtue. Misery is, indeed, the necessary result of all deviation from rectitude; but early debauchery, early disease, early profligacy of all kinds, are peculiarly fruitful of wretchedness; as they sow the seeds of misery in the spring of life, when all that is sown strikes deep root, and buds, and blossoms, and brings forth fruit in profuse abundance.

In the disagreements between children and parents, it is certain that the children are usually most culpable. Their violent passions and defective experience render them disobedient and undutiful. Their love of pleasure operates so violently, as often to destroy the force of filial affection. A parent is stung to the heart by

the ingratitude of a child. He checks his precipitancy, and perhaps with too little command of temper; for who can always hold the reins? Asperity produces asperity. But the child was the aggressor, and therefore deserves a great part of the misery which ensues. It is, however, certain, that the parent is often imprudent, as well as the child undutiful. He should endeavour to render home agreeable, by gentleness and reasonable indulgence; for man at every age seeks to be pleased, but more particularly at the juvenile age. He should, indeed, maintain his authority; but it should be like the mild dominion of a limited monarch, and not the iron rule of an austere tyrant. If home is rendered pleasing, it will not long be deserted. The prodigal will soon return, when his father's house is always ready to receive him with joy.

What is said of the consequences of domestic disunion to sons, is equally to be applied to daughters. Indeed, as the misconduct of daughters is more fatal to family peace, though perhaps not more heinous in a moral view, particular care should be taken to render them attached to the comforts of the family circle. When their home is disagreeable, they will be ready to make any exchange; and will often lose their characters, virtue, and happiness, in the pursuit of it. Indeed, the female character and happiness are so easily injured, that no solicitude can be too great in their preservation. But prudence is necessary in every good cause, as well as zeal; and it is found by experience, that the gentlest method of government, if it is limited and directed by good sense, is the best. It ought, indeed, to be steady, but not rigid; and every pleasure which is innocent in itself and in its consequences ought to be admitted, with a view to render less disagreeable that unwinking vigilance which a delicate and sensible father will judge necessary in the care of a daughter.

To what wickedness as well as wretchedness, matrimonial disagreements lead, every day's history will clearly inform us. When the husband is driven from his home by a termagant, he will seek enjoyment, which is denied him at his own house, in the haunts of vice, and in the riots of intemperance: nor can female corruption be wondered at, though it must be greatly pitied and regretted, when in the heart of a husband, which love and friendship should soften, hatred is found to rankle. Conjugal infelicity not only renders life most uncomfortable, but leads to that desperate dissoluteness and carelessness in manners which terminates in the ruin of health, peace, and fortune. If we may form a judgment from the divorces and separations which happen in the gay world, we may conclude, that the present manners are highly unfavourable to conjugal felicity. And we see, consistently with my theory, that the consequence of these domestic disagreements is the prevalence of vice in a very predominant degree, as well as of misery.

But it avails little to point out evils without recommending a remedy. One of the first rules which suggests itself is, that families should endeavour, by often and seriously reflecting on the subject, to convince themselves, that not only the enjoyment but the virtue of every individual greatly depends on a cordial union. When they are convinced of this, they will endeavour to promote it; and it fortunately happens, that the very wish and attempt of every individual must infallibly secure success. It may, indeed, be difficult to restrain the occasional sallies of temper; but where there is, in the more dispassionate moments, a settled desire to preserve domestic union, the transient violence of passion will not often produce a permanent rupture.

It is another most excellent rule, to avoid a gross familiarity, even where the connexion is most intimate.

The human heart is so constituted as to love respect. It would, indeed, be unnatural in very intimate friends to behave to each other with stiffness; but there is a delicacy of manner, and a flattering deference, which tends to preserve that degree of esteem which is necessary to support affection, and which is lost in contempt when it deviates into excessive familiarity. An habitual politeness of manners will prevent even indifference from degenerating to hatred. It will refine, exalt, and perpetuate affection.

But the best and most efficacious rule is, that we should not think our moral and religious duties are only to be practised in public, and in the sight of those from whose applause we expect the gratification of our vanity, ambition, or avarice; but that we should be equally attentive to our behaviour among those who can only repay us by reciprocal love. We must show the sincerity of our principles and professions by acting consistently with them, not only in the senate, in the field, in the pulpit, at the bar, or in any public assembly, but at the fire-side.

No. XVIII.

HINTS TO YOUNG MEN WHO ARE DESIGNED FOR ORDERS.

It is no reproach to the church to say, that it is supplied with ministers by the emoluments it affords. Life must be supported; and if the prospect of support is one motive in impelling men to enter on the clerical office, it is a natural, a reasonable motive, and in no respect disgraceful. A son, it is true, is destined to the church because his father or friend is the patron of a living: or he is placed at a free-school, and is carried on to college with a view to a scholarship; or he fixes on the profession himself from a love of letters and tranquillity, and from the hope of gaining a quiet and easy,

though small stipend, in a liberal and an useful employment. There is nothing in all this unreasonable; and though hypocrisy and fanaticism may disclaim such motives, yet if he who is actuated by them, as the greater part certainly are, possesses a pious and devout mind, prepares himself duly for entrance on the office, and discharges its duties conscientiously when he is in it, he is a worthy and valuable priest, and probably a better man than they who revile him.

But whatever causes may have inclined a young man to devote himself to the church, I will suppose him just dismissed from his school, and will submit to his consideration a few remarks, which, I hope, will be useful. With respect to enthusiasts, I will not presume to direct them. They, indeed, are apt to suppose themselves guided by a superior illumination, to which few can confidently pretend.

To facilitate the tenure of some preferments, and to satisfy the prejudices of the world, it will be necessary to take academical degrees. This cannot be done reputably without becoming a member of an English university. If the finances of the student are inadequate to his independent support, he will probably be tempted to reside in one of them, for the sake of the emoluments of scholarships, fellowships, or exhibitions. If, indeed, a stricter discipline, and a few regulations in the exercises, should take place, he will do right to fix his residence in the venerable seats of learning, where every convenience for the purpose of study is liberally afforded.

But if neither the discipline nor the statutes are altered, I would advise him, barely to keep two terms a year for several years, which may be annually done by him in the space of five or six weeks only, so as, in due time, to derive as good a right, by the statutes, as any other members *to the honours* bestowed by an

university convocation. In Oxford, for instance, three weeks spent at Easter, and a fortnight in Act term, are the seasons which I recommend. This excursion may furnish an agreeable variety, and the time may be well spent in examining the public libraries, and in attending the public lecturers, who contrive to circumscribe their courses within the limits of the few weeks required by the statutes to keep a term. With respect to a voluntary residence at either university during six or eight months at a time, though certainly right if a reformation should take place, I consider it, in their present state, as dangerous, expensive, and attended with no advantage great enough to compensate the disadvantage, and which may not be enjoyed abundantly better in the family of a worthy and learned clergyman in a country village. By all means let the long intervals be employed in study, for which the silence of a village retreat, if a sufficient number of books are to be procured, is far better accommodated than the society of noisy young men, who contrive to do as they please by night and by day; who are above control; and who have sometimes caused the college to resemble the tavern and the brothel. I have no reason to express myself with resentment on the subject of the universities*. I say what I think; and I say it because it would ill become me to conceal any thing in the knowledge of which ingenuous youth is greatly interested.

If a young man is fortunate enough to find a worthy clergyman who will be his companion and instructor from nineteen to twenty-three, he will direct the course of studies, and superintend the moral conduct. But as I know that all will not be able to find such a one, and that the greater part cannot, from the slenderness of

* Since this was written, several very important regulations have been made in both universities; and the colleges in general preserve a good discipline.

their fortunes, make such a compensation as might probably be required by him when found, I shall proceed to offer my advice.

At the age of one-and-twenty it will be proper to begin the studies more immediately preparatory to ordination. If it be possible, a young man of similar views and intentions should be procured as an associate. I say, then, that without any tutor, by the direction of books, they may thus, with due application, make at least as great an improvement in this retreat as they could in any university. In these circumstances, they would be less exposed to dissipation; and for that reason, among others, they would be more attached to study, and would succeed in it better. To be initiated in the gross debauchery of a corrupt university is surely the worst preparation possible for the sacred office.

Such would be my plan till the universities should be reformed. But since many reasons will concur to induce parents to send their sons to the universities as usual, such as the expectation of various pecuniary advantages, the opportunities of forming connexions, the fear of singularity, and, indeed, the difficulty of deviating from the accustomed path, I will suppose a student intended for the church just matriculated, and will submit to his opinion the following suggestions:

He is sent to college to improve his mind and morals, to become a good scholar, and a good man; not a man of pleasure, nor a man of fashion. Let him, then, resolve to pursue his studies indefatigably, and pray God Almighty to preserve his innocence, and to be a guardian to him, now he is removed from the fostering wing of an affectionate parent. Let him beware of being overcome by ridicule, by which he will certainly be attacked. Let him be steady in his principles, and spirited in his actions: exhibiting that vivacity and resolution in his good purposes which

others display in their bad ones. Let him recollect, that he is preparing for a sacred office, and study to render his conduct consistent with his views. But, with all his virtues, and all his prudence, let him avoid the appearance of unnecessary stiffness, of hypocrisy, or of more singularity than is required for the preservation of his principles. Let him also most carefully avoid a censorious disposition. It is his business to advance his own good qualities to all attainable perfection; not to be morose, or calumnious on the defects and faults of others. He will see, pity, and avoid them; but he will leave the office of correction to those who ought to assume it.

The foolish exercises performed in the public schools are too ridiculous to deserve a serious censure: but as his degree may be denied him if he fails in any particular of this formal trifling, he must give them, and the studies which are connected with them, so much attention as well qualify him to perform them with facility and confidence. The classics in general, the Hebrew language, and the books introductory to divinity, will have a better claim to his serious application.

The preparatory improvements should not be confined to that moderate degree of excellence which may be required in a chaplain's examination. They who aim only at passing an examination, usually relinquish their studies when the examination is past. With a good character, moderate attainments, and those recommendatory testimonies which are easily procured, there is no danger of rejection. But he who deserves to succeed will not be satisfied without making a solid improvement in useful theology,

A yonng clergyman, if he wishes to be esteemed by his parishioners, and to promote their welfare, must take particular care, on first entering on his cure, that he makes favourable impressions on the subject of his

morals and his sincerity. However young, he must remember that, by assuming the office of a public and religious instructor, he has assumed a grave character. If he is not reasonably grave, he may indeed be pardoned, or be pitied; but he will not be valued. I mean not that he should be austere, nor puritanical; but that he should avoid even the appearance of that disgustful levity of manners, and that excessive profligacy, which have sometimes disgraced the younger clergy. That real levity and real profligacy are to be avoided, I need not inform him; but at the same time I am sorry to be obliged to confess, that the serious part of mankind have long had just reason to express their displeasure at the frequent occurrence of the professed clerical libertine. He will avoid evil, and the appearance of evil. If he cannot bring his mind to sacrifice youthful follies to the dignity of his profession, he should not engage in it.

Many plead that they are young, and that youth ought to excuse the follies which result from the too ardent love of pleasure. But if they are young, they should remember that they thought themselves old enough to assume the office of instructors of mankind; and qualified to warn their fellow-creatures to avoid those very irregularities which they not only practise, but in which they glory, as marks of spirit.

The clergyman who would be respected, and every clergyman would be respected if he would be useful, must preserve a decency of dress. He must be affable; but his affability must be tempered with reserve. He must be regular in the performance of parochial duty, and pay at least as much attention to the poor as to the rich. He must read prayers, and preach with fervency and earnestness; not as if he considered his business as a job, by which he is to earn a certain pay, or as if he did not believe what he uttered. His elo-

quence will be forcible, but not theatrical; pathetic, but not affected. He must not be covetous, nor very rigid in exacting of the poor his just dues. He must be benevolent and beneficent in an exemplary degree; winning men by persuasion, forgiving injuries, and teaching more forcibly by his life than his discourses. He must not be a more constant attendant on levees and courts than at church, a sycophant, a parasite, or a professed preferment-hunter; for we cannot esteem him who, while he recommends to us the pursuit of crowns of glory in a better world, appears to fix his own heart on the charms of a mitre, and to love this world, vain and transitory as he describes it, with peculiar ardour and constancy of affection.

No. XIX.

HINTS TO YOUNG MEN WHO ARE DESIGNED FOR A MILITARY OR NAVAL LIFE.

THE exigences of the state have called for an increase of the military orders, and it must be owned that our British youth have not been slow to obey the summons; for there is scarcely a town or village in the kingdom where you will not meet as you pass along, cockades, epaulettes, and scarlet coats, accompanied with fierce looks, and struts *à la militaire*. The military spirit is indeed so widely diffused, that there is reason to believe the nation will shortly become a nation of warriors. But as the military spirit is rather adverse to the gentle arts of peace, and as the young heroes are apt to lay down their books as soon as they take up their arms, I will suggest to them a few hints, which may probably prevent their heroism from degenerating to brutality. I wish them not to imagine, that the moment they have put their hats on sideways, and dressed themselves at their toilettes in complete uniform, they are soldiers. They may be pretty figures,

and, doubtless, will be able to do great execution at an assembly; but it does not follow that they will be equally successful in the field of battle.

Many, who enter on the profession while they are striplings, are apt to suppose, that a sword, a cockade, and shoulder-knot, constitute them complete gentlemen. These, however, will not constitute them men, and much less gentlemen. An ignorant, rude, and mean mind, under a fine red coat, is no less visible, and more contemptible, than if it appeared under rags, and the dress of a mechanic.

Almost all the professions have some characteristic manners, which the professors seem to adopt, with little examination, as necessary and as honourable distinctions. It happens, unfortunately, that profligacy and libertinism are thought by weaker minds almost as necessary a part of a soldier's uniform as his shoulder-knot. To hesitate at an oath, to decline intoxication, to profess a regard for religion, would be almost as ignominious as to refuse a challenge. Insolvency and disease, some of the greatest misfortunes which can befal a human creature, are often thought to add a grace to the military man. He dresses, he drinks, he blusters, he spends his money, he ruins his constitution and his peace; but the compensation for all this is, that he is a favourite of the ladies; and really in this his ultimate object he often succeeds; for many of those, who are as weak as himself, are ready to run wild at the sight of a red coat. Age and ugliness, disease and rottenness, are all lost in the irresistible charms of a piece of scarlet broad-cloth; and many a young man, who has been repulsed in a common dress, has been arrayed by his tailor for the battle, and gained a complete victory. The cross-legged artist has often metamorphosed a Thersites into an Adonis. But this

silly attachment of silly women tends immediately to increase that profligacy which has ever been the fertile source of female misery; and now, when you can hardly turn without seeing a military man, the evil must necessarily be increased, and consequently it is the more desirable to administer a remedy.

But here I will interrupt my remarks, to assure the reader, that the puerile vanity and studied profligacy which I have described, is only to be found in those who have been too early commissioned, and have entered on the soldier's life destitute of the gentleman's education. There are indeed many such; for parents who have interest are desirous of entering their sons early, that they may arrive at an exalted post in the prime of manhood. Hence it happens, that the time which should be employed in a virtuous course of literary discipline is thrown away amidst the dissoluteness of a camp, or a barrack, or a ship's crew; and the poor youth, though he is lifted over the heads of veterans, and assumes all the haughty airs of a great man, possesses a mind only distinguished from that of his drummer, or his boatswain, by superior insolence. He has no taste; his pleasures are gross; he is a distinguished brute indeed: but his distinction consists only in superior brutality; his conduct is caprice, and his courage insensibility. He lives a life of misery, varied only by the short gleams of vicious and infamous indulgences. Of such misery as this it is surely friendly to attempt the prevention. If the present generation may not profit by the suggestions which I offer, some, perhaps, in the succeeding one may be rescued from perdition. But, lest what I am compelled to say of the uneducated and unprincipled part of the profession should be extended too far, I must add, that I am well convinced a great part of the army consists of men who

have entered on the military profession from the best motives, and have carried into the camp the accomplishments of the school.

To the other part, whose misfortune it has been to be engaged in an unsettled life, without instruction in any of the valuable parts of science, without moral principles, or even the idea of religion, it may not be useless to address a few admonitions.

Let them endeavour to persuade themselves of the beauty, the value, and the pleasures, of a cultivated mind. Let them compare one of their profession who possesses the graces of the understanding with another of equal rank, whose ideas are low, whose sentiments are narrow and selfish, whose pleasures are gross, and who has no method of employing his abundant leisure but in drunkenness and debauchery. The contrast will exhibit the deformity which I am describing in striking colours. The one is respected and beloved; happy in himself, and the cause of happiness in all around him: the other, though he is always pursuing pleasure, never finds it pure and sincere; but spends a feverish being in vanity and vice, and precipitates that dissolution at which all but himself have reason to rejoice.

Now the leisure which this profession frequently enjoys above all others, as it is often the cause of vice, so it affords a fine opportunity for making improvement. But how shall the uncultivated soldier begin? He was taken from his school before he had laid any foundation on which he might build the fabric of learning. Where this is the case, we must not hope that he will be able to acquire the learned languages; but if he acquires a taste for English books, he will soon find his nature improved by reading the best of them, like the wild stock from the wilderness, when grafted with a cion of a valuable fruit-tree.

In every profession there is a certain quantity of practical and technical knowledge which ought to be particularly attended to, because the profession cannot be exercised without it. Tactics and fortification, with the sciences immediately connected with them, must be studied, as essentially necessary to the military and naval officer. But if he stop here, he will still retain the narrowness of an artist, who seeks no farther skill than is necessary to practise his art for the sake of its lucrative advantages.

History, in all its parts, will very properly excite, as it will amply reward, the attention of the soldier. The translations of Thucydides, Polybius, Xenophon, Livy, Sallust, will amuse and instruct his mind with valuable knowledge, and in the end will give him more pleasure than a meagre novel procured at a circulating library. I would advise him to take with him Pope's Homer when he goes to the camp, and lay it under his pillow, and meditate on it in the morning after his devotions. The entertaining of noble thoughts will lead to noble actions; and the poor, debauched, and insolvent officer, beset with bailiffs and surgeons, will become, in this course of discipline, a sensible and prudent man, and perhaps deserve the appellation of a true hero; a title which can never be bestowed on a man whose courage wants conduct, and whose honour wants honesty.

He should recollect that he has a soul, like men who do not wear a red coat; and should think of that immortality which the wisest of mankind have expected. Let him not be ashamed of reading the Scriptures, or those excellent comments upou them, the sermons of our great English divines. It is false valour which sets God and eternity at defiance; and it is real cowardice to be afraid of the ridicule which the performance of religious or any other duty may incur. The

soldier is often heard to say, in the language of his profession, that he is upon duty; and it is to be wished he considered the meaning of the word in its full extent.

What is said to military men must be extended to mariners. They have, in former days, sometimes sunk far beneath the level of humanity. The leisure and confinement of a ship ought certainly to lead them to seek improvement in letters. But yet a medium is to be observed. Their refinement must not be excessive, lest the fastidiousness of extreme delicacy should destroy the manly bravery and hardiness of the English sailor.

In attending to these admonitions, it will be found that, while the happiness of many unfortunate individuals is increased, the glory and welfare of the community will be better secured. We shall certainly have less to fear from our enemies, and also less from a standing army; for an enlightened understanding, which considers the nature of society, will see the propriety of subjecting, on all domestic emergencies, the military to the civil power.

I cannot close this subject without applauding those generous and liberal men, who, when their country was threatened with invasion, forsook all the comforts of their homes, and, without previous habits to inure them, submitted with alacrity to the inconveniencies of a camp, and the unsettled life of a soldier. Their judicious and patriotic ardour evinces that they wear a sword for their country's good, and are ready to draw it at a moment's warning, under the direction of civil wisdom, for the general DEFENCE.

No. XX.

ON THE AMUSEMENTS OF SUNDAY.

THE institution of a day devoted to rest and reflection, after six days spent in labour and dissipation, is not

only wise in a political and religious view, but highly agreeable to the nature of man. The human mind is so constituted by nature, as to make greater advances by short flights frequently repeated than by uninterrupted progression. After the cessation of a whole day, the operations of the week are begun with fresh ardour, and acquire a degree of novelty; a quality which possesses a most powerful effect in stimulating to application. In truth, no time is lost to the public by the observation of a Sabbath; for the loss of a few hours is amply compensated by the additional vigour and spirit which are given to human activity in the agreeable vicissitude. A thousand reasons might be assigned for the observation of it, supposing it wanted any superadded to the sanction of divine authority. Among others, the long duration of this establishment is, in my opinion, an argument greatly in its favour; for human affairs, in a long course of years, settle for the most part, like water, in their proper level and situation.

It may, then, be numbered among the follies of modern innovators, and pretenders to superior enlargement of mind and freedom from prejudice, that they have endeavoured to destroy the sanctity, and, in course, the essential purposes of this sacred institution. They have laboured to render it a day of public and pleasurable diversion; and if they had succeeded, they would have made Sunday in no respect different from the other days of the week; for if one man were allowed to pursue pleasure at the usual public places, another, who felt the influence of avarice more than of the love of pleasure, would justly have claimed a right to pursue his lucrative labour. And, indeed, it must be owned, that there would be far less evil in prosecuting the designs of honest industry, than in relaxing the nerves of the mind by a dissolute pursuit of nominal pleasures; of such pleasures as usually terminate in

pain, disease, and ruin. The national spirit and strength must be impaired by national corruption. Feebleness of mind is the unavoidable effect of excessive dissipation; but how shall the political machine perform its movements with efficacy, when the minds of the people, the springs of the whole, have lost their elasticity? If you were to prohibit honest labour, and allow public pleasures, Sunday would become a day of uncontrolled debauchery and drunkenness. It would infallibly sink the lower classes to that degenerate state in which they appear in some neighbouring countries, and would consequently faciliate the annihilation of civil liberty.

The decent observation of Sunday is, indeed, to be urged by arguments of a nature greatly superior to political reasons; but political reasons are offered, because, with the opposers of the observation of the Sabbath, political reasons are more likely to have weight than religious. They who hold the Bible so cheap as to have confuted, in their own minds, every thing it contains, without ever having looked into it, are often the professed idolators of Magna Charta. And though it might be in vain to urge, that Sunday, should be decently kept for the sake of promoting the purposes of the Gospel, it would probably be an inducement to pay it all due attention, if we could convince certain persons, that a decent regard to it promotes such sentiments and principles among the people as have a tendency to support the Bill of Rights, and secure the Protestant succession. But every thing which promotes virtue is salutary to the mind, considered only as a medicine; as a bracer, if I may so express it, or corroborative remedy. Now strength and vigour of mind are absolutely necessary, if we would constantly entertain an adequate idea of the blessings of liberty, and take effectual methods to defend it when it is infringed.

But, setting aside both religious and political arguments, or allowing them all their force, still it will be urged by great numbers, and those too in the higher spheres of life, that all business being prohibited on Sundays, they are really at a loss how to spend their time. "Let us," say they, "since we are forbidden to work, let us play. Let us have public diversions. There can be no harm in a polite promenade. Indeed," they insist, "if it were not for the prejudices of the canaille, it would be right to permit more places of public diversion on Sundays than on other days; obviously because we have nothing else to do but to attend to them. But English prejudices are too deeply rooted to be eradicated. On the Continent the return of Sunday is delightful; but in our gloomy island it is a blank in existence, and ought to be blotted out of the calendar."

Such arguments are, indeed, attended with their own refutation; but it is certainly true, that some orders among us are distressed for methods of employing their time on a Sunday. I will therefore beg leave, from motives of compassion, to suggest a few hints which may contribute to relieve them from the very painful situation of not knowing how to pass away the lagging hours. Sunday is selected by the fashionable for travelling to their country-seats, or to the watering-places; and it is observed by the country people, that on no day so many coaches with coronets pass through their towns and villages as on the Lord's Day. But to Christians there are other employments peculiar to the day, which will leave no part of it disengaged. If any are not Christians, their contempt of the Sabbath is one of the least of their errors; and, before it can be removed, a belief must be produced; to attempt which does not immediately fall within the limits or design of this paper.

But, supposing them Christians, let us endeavour to

provide amusement for them during the twelve hours in every seven days, in which the business of the world is precluded. If lords and dukes would condescend to go to their parish-churches, they might find themselves well employed from ten o'clock till twelve. To the prayers they can have no reasonable objection; and with respect to the sermon, though its diction or its sentiments should not be excellent, yet, in the present times, the want of merit is usually compensated by brevity. And the great man may comfort himself, during its continuance, with reflecting, that, though he is neither pleased nor instructed by it, yet he himself is preaching in effect a most persuasive sermon by giving his attendance. His example will attract many auditors; and bad indeed must be the discourse from which the hearer cannot derive some advantage. If any charitable purpose is to be accomplished, and there never passes a Sunday but in the metropolis many such purposes are to be accomplished, the bare presence of a man in high life will contribute greatly to augment the pecuniary collection. And, if a peer of the realm were as willing to give his presence to a charity-sermon as to a horse-race, to contribute to the support of orphans and widows, as to keep a stud and a pack of hounds, perhaps he would find himself no loser even in the grand object of his life,—the enjoyment of pleasure.

The interval between the morning and evening service may surely be spent in reading, or in improving conversation. The rest of the day, even to eight o'clock, may be spent in the metropolis at church, if any one chooses it: for evening lectures abound. And, though there is no obligation to attend at more than the established times, yet no man can say there are no public places of resort, when he can scarcely turn a corner without seeing a church-door open, and hearing a bell importunately inviting him to enter.

The little time which remains after the usual religious duties of the day may certainly be spent in such a manner as to cause no tedium, even though the gaming-houses be shut, and the rigid laws forbid us to enter Vauxhall, the ball-rooms, and the theatres. A cheerful walk amidst rural scenes is capable of affording, in fine weather, a very delightful pleasure. In all seasons, at all hours, and in all weathers, conversation may furnish an exquisite delight; and such books may be procured as are able to improve, exalt, refine, and captivate. He who calls in question the truth of this, must allow his hearers to call in question his claim to rationality.

The subordinate classes, for I have hitherto been speaking of the higher, seldom complain that they know not what to do on a Sunday. To them it is a joyful festival. They, for the most part, are constant attendants at church; and the decency of their habits and appearance, the cleanliness which they display, the opportunity they enjoy of meeting their neighbours in the same regular and decent situation with themselves, render Sunday highly advantages to them, exclusive of its religious advantages. They usually fill up the intervals of divine service with a rural walk, and their little indulgences at the tea-houses are highly proper and allowable. They are confined to sedentary and laborious work during the week; and a walk in the fresh air is most conducive to their health, while it affords them a very lively pleasure, such a pleasure, indeed, as we have all felt in Milton's famous description of it. The common people are sufficiently delighted with such enjoyments, and would be really displeased with those public diversions which our travelled reformers in high life have desired to introduce.

Neither are they in want of disputing societies to fill

up their time. There are parish-churches in abundance. After they have attended at them, it is far better that they should walk in the fields, than be pent up in a close room and putrefying air, where their health must suffer more than even in the exercise of their handicraft trade. But the injury of their health is, indeed, one of the least of the evils which they must endure, were they allowed to attend at every turbulent assembly, which either the seditious, the avaricious, or the infidel might convene.

Why should the present race, whether high or low, stand more in need of public diversions on a Sunday than our forefathers in the last and in the beginning of the present century? No good reason can be given. It may not indeed be improbable that the true origin of this new-created want is, that the greater part of the present race, from a defect of a religious education, or from subsequent dissipation, which is found to obliterate all serious ideas, have no relish for the proper and natural methods of spending their time on a Sunday, the performance of religious duties, and the exertions of beneficence on principles of Christian charity.

No. XXI.

ON THE COMPLAINTS OF MEN OF LEARNING.

An impartial observer will be obliged to confess, that if the real evils of men of genius and learning be not greater than those of others, yet the sense of them is commonly more acute. The same delicacy of feeling which renders them particularly susceptible of intellectual beauty makes them feel more sensibly the common distresses of human life.

Men of genius and learning are, for the most part, in a state of intense thought; while they who are engaged in less refined pursuits are frequently involved in mental insensibility; and since happiness is only in the

mind, every little accident must disturb his repose who is always in meditation. The string which is constantly kept in a state of tension will vibrate on the slightest impulse.

The pleasures of men of literature are those which arise from the contemplation of greatness, novelty, and beauty; pleasures of the purest and most exalted nature. Perhaps no state is more truly happy than that of a man of genius, at the time he is closely engaged in surveying either of these three sources of imaginative enjoyment; but the very purity and excellence of these pleasures are ultimately the occasion of some degree of pain to their votaries. Our present condition will not permit merely mental gratifications to engross our whole care and attention; and when the mind reverts from its ideal bliss to the occupations which its union with a body of necessity enjoins, the transition from supreme delight to insipidity and vexation becomes the occasion of peculiar misery.

Perfection is ever the object of genius; but perfection is not to be found in human affairs. Genius is, therefore, disgusted with the impossibility of obtaining that which is constantly in its view. This it suffers in the recesses of study; but upon entrance into the transactions and employments of busy life, the perfection to which it aspires is much more rarely visible. Objects, which to the common mind are pleasing or indifferent, appear to the mind of genius deformed and disgusting, because they fall short of that image of perfection, formed in the fancy, to which, as a standard, every thing is usually referred. Thus acuteness of discernment serves to discover concealed blemishes, as the miscroscope sees a spot where the naked eye beholds nothing but beauty.

The man of genius and application is generally engaged in serious employments. He lives (σπουδαιως, as

the Greeks call it) constantly attentive to some end. The rest of the world devote the greatest share of their time to ease, merriment, and diversion. The man of severe study is sometimes drawn from his closet, in compliance with custom, or solicited by importunity, to partake of the ordinary amusements of common life. He goes with reluctance and timidity; for perhaps he cannot shine in company, and he looks upon every avocation as an obstacle to the accomplishment of his chief end and wishes. He returns with chagrin, because, in the hour of convivial gaiety, or of festal levity, he has found his merits pass unnoticed, and his character not understood.

The several causes which have been thus far assigned for the querulous disposition of literary men, cannot reflect on them any disgrace; but there are others equally probable, and more dishonourable.

They who are constantly endeavouring to add to their attainments, mean at the same time to increase their value, and acquire reputation. Every step of progressive advancement fills the breast of the proficient with a higher opinion of his own merit, and confirms his consciousness of self-dignity. But the world is not privy to every new acquisition which the student makes in his closet. He therefore increases his exactions of respect, before his companions are sensible of an increase of merit. From disappointed pride, therefore, the cultivator of knowledge derives no inconsiderable part of his uneasiness.

Every end that is worth pursuit has a great number of pursuers. Competitors naturally look upon each other as enemies, mutually opposing their several wishes. This jealousy is no where to be found more frequent, or more violent, than among the pursuers of literary honours. The student is therefore often envious, and, as the satirist remarks, no Sicilian tyrant ever invented a greater torture than envy.

After all, perhaps, that lowness of spirits which a sedentary life and an unremitted attention produce, may give rise to complaints founded only in an hypochondriac imagination.

Whether or not these are the true causes of the complaints and wretchedness of the learned, it is not very material to determine. Certain it is, that they who are furnished with the means of the greatest happiness are frequently the most miserable. By attending to great things, they neglect those which appear little, but on which happiness is found by experience greatly to depend.

No. XXII.

ON THE SUPERFICIAL NATURE AND PERNICIOUS TENDENCY OF MODERN ETHICS.

THE neglect of the classics, and of the ancient moral philosophers, in modern education, tends no less to injure virtue, and every valuable and lovely disposition of the heart, than to corrupt taste, and degrade dignity.

It is true, indeed, that the present times, compared with the ancient, are properly the old age of the world; and if we reason from analogy, we must conclude that they surpass, in the knowledge of external nature, the ages which have preceded. Accordingly we find that in all those things, a skill in which necessarily depends on long experience and extensive observation, the moderns possess an indisputable superiority. In useful science and in natural philosophy, the ancients fall so short, as not to bear the comparison. Aristotle and Pliny committed their dreams to writing, instead of an authentic natural history, and a rational system of physics. No one can justly question their ingenuity; but they wanted proper materials for its employment. They were contented with reports not only concerning subjects which they had no opportunity of examining, but concerning those which fell under

their notice. They induced general remarks from too small a number of particulars. Pliny indeed seems to have written a physical romance, with an intention to entertain, rather than to discover and communicate severe truths. The more marvellous his representation, the better it answered his purpose; and it was not very likely to be strictly canvassed in an age when the true spirit of philosophical inquiry was totally unknown.

The ancients had not those instruments of science, the air-pump, the telescope, and the microscope. And among their principal obstructions is to be numbered, the want of knowing the futility of hypothesis, when unsupported by experiment. While Fancy was allowed to amuse herself in framing systems of her own, Reason sunk in repose, and declined the laborious task of close examination. The sincerest admirer of the ancients will therefore resign their pretensions to scientific excellence; and though he will recommend the study of Pliny as a classic who writes agreeably, yet will he advise the votary of science to substitute, in the place of him and of all the ancient naturalists, the works of Boyle, of Newton, of Buffon, and of the numerous writers in the Philosophical Transactions.

But for their defeats in natural the ancients compensate by their excellence in moral philosophy. Mechanical instruments were not wanted to make observations on human nature. Natural sagacity, improved by generous education, and exercised in a civilised community, was enabled to make just conclusions concerning the powers, the passions, the duties, the vices of man as an individual, and as connected with others in his domestic, social, and civil relations. But the knowledge of Nature and of her operations, compared with the knowledge of ourselves and of our duty, is of small consequence.

'It is justly remarked, that our English divines are the best moralists, with respect to matter, whom the world ever produced. And for this it is easy to account. They established their precepts on the firm basis of revealed religion, and not on the sandy foundation of human systems. But the misfortune is, that they are little attended to by those who stand most in need of reformation. The libertine, the man of the world, the polite modern philosopher, has been taught to associate the idea of dulness with a sermon, and would fear the imputation of prejudice, if he were to profess a belief of the received religion, and conform his actions to its precepts. His creed is formed from the opinions of Voltaire, Rousseau, Helvetius, Hume, and many others, who have perverted taste, genius, and learning, to the purpose of supporting libertinism, both of practice and principle.

It is not likely that he who is taught to look upon himself only as an animal, furnished, indeed, with a superior degree of sagacity, but, like his fellow-brutes, doomed to perish for ever at death, should possess that elevation of sentiment which Christianity inspires, and which is necessary to constitute the great man in the private as well as in the public scenes of life. His principles necessarily lead him to assimilate with those animals, among whom he is ambitious of being numbered. The enjoyments of sense will be, in his idea, the chief good; and that severe virtue, which alone can render him serviceable to the great community of mankind, or distinguish him honourably in the society of which he is a member, he will esteem the characteristic of visionary enthusiasts, who know not the nature of man and the end of his existence.

But ancient philosophy teaches a respect for human nature. To have that reverence for one's self, which arises from a just sense of the superior endowments of

a human creature, was a precept of the earliest philosophers, and was thought to be the best security for a generous and virtuous conduct. It is not pride; for pride consists in arrogating merits to which it has no claim: but it is an adequate idea of our own dignity in the scale of being, when compared with the brutes, and a resolution to support it. Yet how should he think or act like the lord of the creation, who is taught, by the insinuations of a modern philosopher, that man is to be classed in the same species with the ape and the monkey?

Among the profligate, indeed, and the uninstructed, we see humanity sadly depraved. Attentive only to the solicitations of the senses, and obedient to every passion, the vulgar, both of the higher and the lower ranks, lead a life truly and merely animal. If, however, it be wisdom to live according to nature, and the newly divulged opinion, that man is no more by nature than a sagacious brute, be true, then are those whom we call the basest and most worthless of mankind the patterns of imitation, and the only true philosophers. Education, on these principles, is no longer necessary. The passions are competent guides, and the more violent they are, the more unambiguous their directions. Let our schools be shut up; for why should we be at the pains to study, while true wisdom and virtue are to be learned at an easy rate of our brother beasts in the stable and the dog-kennel?

It has been the aim of the earlier poets, legislators, sages, and reformers, to advance human nature from its primeval rudeness to all the perfection of which it is capable in a state of civilisation. Men in general have willingly followed their dictates, and have found progressive happiness in progressive improvement. It was reserved for the present age of paradox to reconcile the idea of advancement with retrograde motion,

of improving human life by restoring habits, principles, and weaknesses, long exploded and overcome. It is well known, that several celebrated writers have inferred the absurdity of many not only innocent, but laudable and beneficial, notions and practices, from their being unknown, or different from those established in savage nations in the state of nature. In order to imbibe ideas of decency and moral fitness, they have obliquely referred us to the groves of Otaheite. That such writers should have appeared is wonderful; but it is still more so, that they should have found numerous readers and admirers. And it is a striking event in the history of mankind, that, after the efforts of several thousand years in promoting civilisation, many have been found desirous of returning to the wretched practices of savage life.

But even he who is taught to revere the wisdom of the naked Indian, and to despise the improvement of his own times and nation, is more likely to think and act with dignity than the man who believes himself a machine. Such an one, to be consistent, must renounce the idea of the soul's supremacy over the actions of the body, and must resign himself to the impulse of that blood, of which alone he believes himself to consist. As an engine, he will yield to every motion without resistence; for the perfection of the machine depends on its moving with the least possible friction or impediment. The mistake of him who looks on himself in this light, is almost as absurd as that of the hypochondriac visionary, who, in the temporary madness of his reverie, imagines himself transformed into an inanimate substance.

The dark and disputatious style and manner in which the modern philosopher vents his sceptical ideas, though it may give his disciples a turn for metaphysics, and teach them to involve a dispute in perplexity, has

very little tendency to improve the understanding, and none at all to promote a frankness and honesty of disposition.

It is, indeed, with a pleasure equal to that of turning from a putrefying carcass to behold the living body in a state of youth and beauty, that one leaves the poor inventions of the vain sceptic and the gloomy metaphysician, to recollect the names and opinions of Socrates, Plato, Xenophon, and Cicero. From these I learn, what is confirmed by Christianity, that I have a soul within me which shall survive its perishable habitation. These inform me, that human nature approaches to the divine; that virtue will make me happy in myself, and recommend me to the favour of that Being who constantly superintends the world which he first created.

The philosophy of many among the moderns excludes religion. Infidelity is its basis. But can there be a truly great man without religion? There may be a cunning, a witty, and audacious man; but there cannot be a great man without religion. Nor will he become a good senator, a good judge, a good commander, or fill the lower departments of civil and social life with integrity and honour, who disregards an oath, and from principle seeks only self-interest and private gratification.

The man of the world, it is true, will often discharge the duties of his station with decent regularity. A regard for fame, a desire to enlarge and to preserve connexions, will keep him within the bounds of apparent rectitude. But, where deviation can be concealed, where compliance with temptation is compatible with safety, what shall restrain him? Nothing in the moral system of a philosophical unbeliever.

No. XXIII.

ON THE STYLE OF HISTORY.

THE end of oratory is to persuade, of poetry to please, and of history to instruct by the recital of true events. The style of each must be adapted to produce the intended purpose, not of the writer of any particular oration, poem, or history, but of oratory, and history in genearl. Any composition arrogating either of these names, but assuming ornaments foreign to its nature, is faulty. It may be popular from fashion, personal influence, and caprice, but it will not descend to posterity; because it is inconsistent with those rules which have been long and universally established, and which have been thus established for no other reason but because they were found agreeable to the constitution of the human mind, and best adapted to produce on it a poweful effect.

The diction of oratory should be nervous, pointed, impetuous, and adorned with every embellishment which rhetoric has invented. Poetry admits a style made up of graces. Every ornament, natural and artificial, may find a place in it. But it is not so with history; for the purpose of history is truth, and truth requires no more than to be fairly, openly, and unaffectedly exhibited. If, then, the embellishments appropriated to poetry and eloquence be borrowed by the historian, though his work may delight a vitiated taste, he must not be recommended as a model. History should indeed possess a dignity; but it should arise, like the majesty of Grecian architeture, from the simplicity of its ornaments.

No good rule is unsupported by a reason. And the reason why history admits not a profusion of embellishment is, that such embellishment cannot be applied without an obvious appearance of art; but the appearance of art tends to call in question the historian's

veracity, his primary and indispensable excellence. The mind is naturally suspicious, and where it finds art in one instance, it will expect that it exists in another, and is not seen, only because it is concealed with more subtlety.

Livy and Tacitus, excellent as they are in general, have been convicted of deviating into poetry; and there are many passages in both of them, which, if you attend to the accentual and not to the syllabic quantity, may be scanned like hexameter verses. The language and thoughts in Livy's descriptions are often highly poetical; as, to mention, for instance, one particular passage, the celebrated account of the combats of the Horatii and Curiatii. But this must be said in the defence of both, that they are transported by the warmth of their minds, when they are describing a very interesting transaction, and that, for the most part, their narrative proceeds with all the dignity and simplicity of a correct taste. Their deviations into poetry, though not strictly defensible, yet, as they appear to be the genuine effects of their feelings excited by extraordinary occasions, are really delightful. We can bear a few occasional flashes; but our eyes would turn away with pain from a long and continued glare. Yet names must not overpower the authority of reason and just criticism; and if Herodotus, or Livy, or Tacitus, have admitted ornaments inconsistent either in their nature or number with an unaffected simplicity, they are so far faulty.

The assertion, that unaffected simplicity is the most beautiful grace of the historical style, and that the diction should not be such, either in the construction or selection of words, as to allure the attention of the reader from the facts to the words, from the hero to the writer, though it is perfectly consistent with my own opinion, does not rely for support on my judge-

ment alone, but is fully confirmed by the best judges of antiquity.

With these ideas, then, in our minds, we will take a view of history as it appears at present in the hands of recent historians, who have boldly claimed and received the palm.

It is generally agreed among learned critics, that some of the most popular historians of France have violated the gravity and dignity of the historic page by perpetual attempts to be witty. When the reader takes up the history of a celebrated age and a renowned king, his mind is in a tone to admit elevated ideas, and such as are consistent with so noble and majestic a subject. And though his imagination may be a little diverted, his taste and judgement are offended at finding, in the place of manly reflections, every paragraph terminating with the witticism of an epigram. It is evident, that such works may afford pleasure, because many have been pleased with them; but it is equally certain, that the pleasure is not such as results from legitimate history. The writer evidently labours to display himself and his own ingenuity; but it is one great secret in the art of writing, that the writer should keep himself out of sight, and cause the ideas which he means to convey fully to engross the reader's attention. They cannot indeed otherwise produce their proper effect. If there are any readers who choose to have the writer present to their view rather than the matter which he writes, they may be said to resemble those spectators who go to the theatre rather to see and hear a favourite actor, than to attend to the persons of the drama. It is not Shakespeare's Hamlet or Lear whom they admire, but some name which stands in rubric characters on the walls and in the play-bills.

But let us confine our present remark to the histo-

rical taste which has of late prevailed in our own country. It is certainly better than the French taste; but if we may judge by the reception of one or two work out of several, it is by no means perfect. The historian of Charles the Fifth possesses so many excellencies that it is almost sacrilegious to detract from his merit. But no writer is perfect; and I doubt not, from the opinion I entertain of his taste and candour, that he will confess, when the ardour of composition is abated, that his style has deviated from the historical to the declamatory. He relates the councils as well as the wars of nations with all the vehemence of a Demosthenes, and the rapid eloquence of a Ciceronian Philippic. The style is glowing and animated in a high degree; but does nature dictate, that a long and diffuse dissertation on such subjects as the feudal state, or on others equally dispassionate in themselves, should be treated in a style which would become an orator in the act of rousing his sluggish countrymen to repel an invader? I will not enter into an inquiry, whether such long dissertations legitimately belong to history or to another species of composition. I believe they might more properly be classed under the name of Political Dissertations. They find no place in the purer models of antiquity; and the reader has certainly a right to complain when they occupy a disproportionate part of a work, and appear in the place of facts, on which he might make his own reflections. But the fire and *vis vivida*, or the life and the spirit which is diffused over this respectable writer's page, induces us to forget a while the rules prescribed by the frigidity of criticism. What though he seems to have made Demosthenes his model instead of Livy or Herodotus? yet, surely, what bears any resemblance to the spirit of that noble Athenian cannot fail to delight and improve. And it ought to be remem-

bered, to the honour of this writer, that he has not made his history the vehicle of any opinions destructive of the civil or religious systems of his county.

It would be happy if this praise could be extended to all our historians; but there has appeared a history, the faults of whose style should have passed unnoticed, if the matter had been less reprehensible. The style of Gibbon displays not the honest warmth of a Robertson, but appears with an air of soft and subtle insinuation, better adapted to introduce a lurking poison. The words are well chosen; but the collocation of them is feeble and effeminate, though painfully elaborate and affected. Idle epithets abound, which, while they load and weary the ear, add little to the meaning and less to the force of the period which they were intended to adorn. There is a disgusting affectation of fastidious delicacy. There is also a tedious sameness in the style, which renders the reading a toil, and which will gradually consign the work to its peaceful shelf, as soon as the fashionable world shall have found another idol; which indeed cannot be a distant event, since variety is essential to its enjoyments; and great books, though written by a man of fashion and an infidel, are still great evils.

The very weak, insolent, and passionate manner in which this writer answered one of his opponents, leaves his readers to conclude that his philosophy has more in it of ostentation than reality. His whole work, indeed, exhibits marks of excessive vanity and conceit. But, such as it is, the learning and the labour displayed in it should have secured my respect, had it not insolently and wickedly laboured to exterminate the last remains of morality and religion from this country. It furnishes arguments for the superficial and vicious in defence of scepticism and profligacy, and thus indirectly tends to sap the foundation of human happiness.

For, though the more learned and the better part of the community despise the vain and wicked attempt, yet it must be remembered, that the majority consists of the foolish, the dissipated, and the corrupt.

It was a mean subterfuge to make history the oblique channel of theological infidelity. An ingenuous young man takes up the book, from the laudable motive of improving his mind with historical knowledge; but, as he reads, he finds himself seduced, and cheated into irreligion and libertinism. The author, like others of his class, meant little more than to acquire distinction by alarming mankind with an attack of what they have been taught to hold dear and sacred. But though vanity is indisputably the motive, the consequences are no less malignant than if the work had originated in malice.

How much better would writers consult their own comfort in the evil day, on the bed of sickness, and at the hour of death, if they would adopt the humility of the Christian, and aim at no other distinction than the esteem and applause of the worthy! But such is the vanity of man's heart, that he is willing to resign, for the sake of an imaginary life of fame, all those hopes of a real and happy immortality, which a belief in Christianity so comfortably teaches us to entertain.

No. XXIV.

ON THE MANNER OF WRITING VOYAGES AND TRAVELS.

It is observed by those decisive critics the booksellers, who judge of the merit of a book by the criterion of its sale, that few books have succeeded better of late than voyages and travels. As that which succeeds is productive of gain, every superficial stripling who takes a trip, takes also notes as he goes along; and, when he returns, puts them into a bookseller's hands to be furbished up and swelled to a marketable

size: and then out skips a brace of volumes. This, it must be confessed, is an ingenious method of making a journey pay its own expenses.

It is not uncommon for Criticism to employ herself in pointing out the end or purpose of any species of writings or writers; as, for instance, the end of poetry, which is to please, and of history, which is to instruct. Now, without any great theoretical skill, and without perusing a page of Aristotle, it is very clear, that the end of the greater part of the writings and writers is the copy-money. What will sell is often the first object; not what is conformable to the eternal laws of truth and propriety, nor what will most essentially promote the happiness of human nature.

To please, is certainly a very valuable end. He who pleases innocently has performed his task well; but here, it seems, lies the difficulty. In order to please the vulgar mind, it is found necessary, through the dearth of genius, to introduce licentious ideas, and to strike at some of the outworks of religion and morality.

The voyages to the South Seas are, indeed, in their design, of a kind very superior to those which I mean to censure. They do honour to the reign in which they were undertaken. They exhibit human nature in new lights, and furnish abundant matter for philosophical reflection. They are to the curious mind of man most delightfully entertaining; but the first writer of them fell into a lamentable error. Instead of relating the events, and leaving the reader to comment on them, he not only makes the comments himself, but makes such comments as tend to invalidate some of the most comfortable articles in the creed of his countrymen. Every reader was astonished when he found a Hawkesworth, who had supported virtue and religion with peculiar energy of diction and of sentiment, *adventuring* at last to call in question a particular provi-

dence. Every reader was also astonished at some loose descriptions. It is certain that we might have been informed of some remarkable features in the Oteheitean character, if the indelicate and corrupting representations had been totally omitted. But who can wonder at what was written, when a Sandwich was the patron?

But let us pass from Hawkesworth to Sterne. Who has read the exquisite touches of nature and sensibility in Sterne's Sentimental Journey without feeling his nerves vibrate with every tender emotion? Sterne has shown what important effects may be produced by a true simplicity of style, and a faithful adherence to nature. I wish it were possible to give him the praise of morality as well as of genius: but the poison he conveys is subtle, and the more dangerous as it is palatable. I believe no young mind ever perused his books without finding those passions roused and inflamed, which, after all that the novelist can advance in their favour, are copious sources of human misery. Many a connexion, begun with the fine sentimentality which Sterne has recommended and increased, has terminated in disease, infamy, want, madness, suicide, and a gibbet. Every writer, whatever may be the weakness and folly of his own life, should take the side of virtue in his public writings, and endeavour to restrain the irregularity of those affections, which, under every restraint, are still capable of producing more evil than any other cause throughout the whole system of human affairs. It is our reason which wants all the aids which art can bestow. Our passions, without the stimulus of licentiousness or indulgent principles, will have strength sufficient to produce as much and more than nature has intended.

Much of Sterne's Journey is certainly founded on

fiction; but it has nevertheless afforded a model to some of those who have pretended to relate nothing but the truth. His sentimental and excessive sensibility was found so engaging, that most of the subsequent authors of travels have been induced to interweave into the body of the work an amorous episode. We have been made acquainted with the *embonpoint* of a servant at an inn, or rather at a hedge ale-house, and the parting pangs of the smitten traveller and his Dulcinea del Toboso have been recorded in London for our edification. The authors might possibly have been involved in a low and criminal amour, or have paid attention to a Madame de Blot, or a Madame d'Ursay; but why inform their readers of their gallantry, unless they mean to attract their attention by inflaming those combustible passions, which, in youthful hearts, catch fire like tinder at a spark? A book, however, thus high-seasoned, will be pretty sure to sell, and therefore will be encouraged by the modern Mæcenates.

Nothing is more easy than to display that kind of wit which consists in obscenity and in blasphemy. He cannot fail to attract notice who attacks opinions which are held sacred; and it was not difficult for the man who panted only for distinction to obtain it by burning the temple of Diana.

A few arrows have therefore been obliquely thrown, by the travellers of late years, on the Christian religion. The Masque is the ridicule of popery; but the mask is transparent. All religion is indirectly stigmatized as weak superstition. Scriptural phrases are used with wanton profaneness in some of our most popular travels, and those levities and vices gently palliated which are forbidden by the sacred laws, and by the British laws, and which British virtue has not yet generally admitted.

I really cannot help thinking, that voyages and travels require fewer of these or of any other arts to render them entertaining than any other writings. Every man of sense and observation must see, as he passes through a foreign country, in every town and village into which he enters, some characteristic and singular circumstances which cannot fail to please in the recital. Truth only is required; and truth, told with judgment and delicacy, will sufficiently recommend the narrative. If any thing occurs injurious to the morals or the political principles of one's own country, it ought to be either totally suppressed, or represented with concomitant censure. I have observed one favourite topic of the conversation as well as writing of many travellers: it is the charming licentiousness of a foreign Sabbath. They represent their country as much in the dark in many particulars; but the prohibition of public diversions on a Sunday they consider as past all endurance, as impolitic, and a mere relic of British barbarism or puritanical austerity.

With respect to the contents of some books of travels, which have been well received, I cannot help thinking it a species of literary fraud, when their authors fill them with long historical accounts, which every man might have collected at his own fire-side, as well as at Venice or at Naples. And I own I was once greatly cheated in finding a very tedious treatise on the consumption in a book of travels, where the title-page led me to expect a large fund of information on subjects relative solely to the manners and customs of a foreign country.

Travellers have often been censured for enumerating what are called trifling occurrences. I think the censure is unjust. Trifling occurrences are often very amusing. If, indeed, they were only amusing, and took up the room of other valuable matter, the censure

might be well founded: but they lead to very important speculations. They suggest hints; and hints, to a fertile fancy, are more acceptable than formal discourses, because they lead the mind to exert its own activity. I own I am pleased when the traveller speaks in the first person, and conducts us from inn to inn, and town to town, with all the familiarity of an old acquaintance. Every thing which concerns him, and is proper to be imparted, interests us. We feel as he did in all his inconveniences and distresses, and derive, from the whole account of small particulars, as well as great, a very valuable share and species of experience.

The style of voyages and travels should be plain, simple, perspicuous, and unaffected. I think they seldom appear to great advantage but when written in the words of the traveller or voyager, at the very time at which the circumstances which he relates occurred. They have then the native hue and complexion of truth, which seldom fails to attach the mind, when clearly presented to its view. It was therefore a want of judgment and of justice which caused the writing of Cook's Voyages to be given to Hawkesworth. Hawkesworth, it is reported, gained several thousand pounds by those materials which poor Cook had gone round the world to collect, and to relate which, as it afterwards appeared, he was well able. The public, it is well remembered, received Cook's narrative much more favourably than the mistaken philosophy of Hawkesworth. When the information is so new and curious as to confine attention by the force of its own attractions, the mind must nauseate irrelevant subjects and obtruded superfluity.

When voyages and travels are free from those faults which I have endeavoured to point out, they are capable of affording a very high and a very pure delight. I know of no books of amusement whatever so well

adapted to young people. They satisfy that eager thirst after knowledge, which is found very strong at a boyish age, and they contain nothing which can corrupt their imaginations. They interest the mind as much as a novel; but, instead of rendering it effeminate and debauched, they make it usefully inquisitive, and furnish it with matter for reflection. Any book which innocently delights the young mind, is, at the same time, much more improving than the best books written too profoundly or too seriously to be capable of attracting his attention. Anson's Voyage, for instance, will contribute more to call forth genius, and open the blossoms of the mind, than a dull didactic treatise of the most sagacious philosopher.

It is, then, a useful attempt to endeavour to clear a species of books which are capable of doing much good, and affording much pleasure, from those evils which a desire of popularity and of gain has often admitted into them. What is already published cannot, indeed, be recalled; but it may possibly be useful to suggest to succeeding writers in this department, that they will then only deserve the esteem and favour of their countrymen, when they import from foreign lands the improvements which they find in them, and not when they introduce additions to that folly, vice, and irreligion, which abound in all countries without importation.

No. XXV.

ON THE FOLLY OF BEING ANXIOUSLY CURIOUS TO INQUIRE WHAT IS SAID OF US IN OUR ABSENCE.

THE best dispositions have usually the most sensibility. They have also that delicate regard for reputation which renders them sorely afflicted by the attacks of calumny. It is not an unreasonable and excessive

eagerly listening to a casual censure uttered in a careless hour, we increase the evil, and cause a rupture where no real offence was intended.

A man who is constantly solicitous to hear the reports which are raised of him, of his family, and of his conduct, depends, in a great measure, for happiness upon his servants; upon those, whose ideas are narrow, and whose hearts too often ungrateful; who overhear a part of a conversation, and supply the rest, when they repeat it, by invention; who love to entertain their visitors and acquaintance with the private affairs of the house in which they live, and who are apt to blacken the characters of their supporters and protectors, in revenge for a reprimand, or from the natural malignity of a bad heart. The tongue, said Juvenal, is the worst part of a bad servant. But the master of a family who is always endeavouring to collect what is uttered by his humble friends, as servants have been called, will find himself subject to perpetual mortification. And it is a circumstance which renders his solicitude peculiarly unwise, that, after all the idle stories which their garrulity or resentment may lead them to propagate, they may be as good servants as any others he might engage in their room, or as human nature, in its uncultivated state, is found in general to afford.

Their foolish words, once uttered, vanish into air; and they return to their duties, and probably will serve their masters as usefully and as faithfully as if nothing had been said in their angry or unthinking moments. So little meaning and weight are there in the words of the weak and the passionate; and so inconsistent is it with wisdom to listen to that tale, which, while it sinks into the mind of him who hears that he is the subject of it, passes over the minds of others, as the shadow over the earth! Supposing it, however, to be noticed, remembered, and even capable of doing him an injury,

yet he can only make it more mischievous by paying attention to it, and by giving it an importance not its own.

It will conduce, in a peculiar manner, to the peace of all persons who superintend large families, or large numbers of assistants, or of subordinate classes; such as the governors of schools and colleges, the generals of armies, the employers of manufacturers, and many others in similar situations; if they can habituate themselves to disregard those calumnies which will certainly be poured upon them, though they should be far from meriting the least degree of ill-treatment. Their hearts will, indeed, be often wrung with grief, if they are sensible of every ill-natured whisper which makes its way, like the worm in the earth, and may at last corrode the worthiest bosom, if the breast-plate of reason and resolution is not previously applied. Whoever has many individuals under his direction, is exposed to the malice of them all; and, as dispositions and tempers are often diametrically opposite, he can scarcely fail to offend as many as he pleases; for the very conduct which pleases one party will give offence to the other. Friends, as well as enemies, are liable to ill-humour and caprice; and every poisoned arrow is levelled at the superintendant, as at a conspicuous mark. A man who has many persons under him must not only not go in search of the darts which are thrown at him, but, even when he cannot avoid seeing them, must let them waste their force unregarded. If he adopt not this conduct, his life will be a perpetual torment, and may possibly terminate in that which is too often the death of good men,—a broken heart.

Perhaps we might be less inclined to inquire what is said of us in our absence, and less affected with it when discovered, if we considered how freely we ourselves are apt to speak even of those we love. We censure

and we ridicule others in the gaiety and thoughtlessness of conversation, and what has been said makes so little impression on ourselves, that we forget it; and in the next hour probably speak with honour of the same persons, and then, and on all occasions, would be ready to serve them. Beware of the man, says Horace, who backbites his friend, or who defends him not when attacked by others. But such is man's nature, that, in a fit of levity, he will speak of another, and hear him spoken of, in such terms, as in his serious moments he would deeply resent. Let any man ask himself, whether he has not often said such things of others, without meaning to injure them, or ever thinking seriously of what he was saying, as, if he were to hear that they were said of himself, in any manner whatever, he would warmly resent? Let him, then, when he finds he has been carelessly censured, endeavour to see the case in the same light in which he saw it when he carelessly censured others. Indeed, it must be allowed, that a man of sensibility and honour cannot take too much pains to vindicate his character from any open and direct calumny; but the same spirit which leads him to that manly conduct will induce him to leave the dirty dealers in scandal to themselves, and to the misery of their mean occupation.

Though a delicate regard for character be virtuous and rational, yet it is really true, that we commonly estimate our own value among others much higher than it is estimated by them. What is said of us, seldom sinks so deeply into their minds, as, from a vain idea of our own importance, we are apt to imagine. We are occasionally talked of, it may be, in the course of common conversation, and serve for topics, together with the weather, the wind, and the news of the day; but he who thinks that he is the constant object of his neighbour's accurate and close inspection, is ignorant of

human nature. Man's chief object of attention is himself; and though, to fill an idle hour, he may talk of others, it is carelessly and indifferently; and whether he speaks in praise or dispraise, he often means neither to serve nor to injure. From supposing ourselves of more consequence with others than we are, we suspect that they are conversing about us, when they really think not of us; and, when they are known by us to have spoken unkindly or contemptuously, we immediately consider them as declared enemies. Our suspicions are awakened when led to entertain bad opinions of mankind, and our good-humour is soured for ever. "But good-humour," says an elegant writer, "is the salt which gives a seasoning to the feast of life, and which, if it be wanting, renders the feast incomplete. Many causes contribute to impair this amiable quality, but nothing, perhaps, more than bad opinions of mankind." To avoid bad opinions of mankind, much of their ill deeds and ill sayings must be attributed to thoughtlessness, and not to malignity alone; we must not always be on the watch to hear what is said against us in an unguarded hour; we must be humble, and consider whether we do not treat others just as we complain of being treated by them; and, while we complain of mankind, whether ourselves, and the dispotions which we entertain, do not furnish some of the justest causes of the complaint. Upon the whole, let it be our first object to do our duty, and not to be very anxious about any censure but that of conscience.

Let the weak and the ill-natured enjoy the poor pleasure of whispering calumny and detraction, and let the man of sense and spirit display the wisdom and dignity of disregarding them. The dog bays the moon, but the moon still shines on in all its beautiful serenity and lustre, and moves in its orbit with undisturbed regularity.

The Scriptures, among all their other recommendations, abound with passages which finely portray the human heart. I will cite one passage, which is very apposite to the subject of this paper: "Take no heed to all words that are spoken, lest thou hear thy servant curse thee. For oftentimes also, thine own heart knoweth, that thou thyself likewise has cursed others." Bishop Hurd has an excellent sermon on this text, the perusal of which suggested some of the foregoing observations.

No. XXVI.

ON THE EFFICACY OF MORAL INSTRUCTION.

It seems to be tacitly agreed among men of the world, that, though books of moral instruction may afford pleasure to the young, or to those who love books, as a connoisseur loves a picture, or a virtuoso his medals, yet they are really of little utility in the actual conduct of life. They assert, that a few practical and artful maxims, collected from an intercourse with the living world, will be more serviceable than all the wisdom of the moral philosopher.

It is very certain, that a knowledge of the world, as it is called, will teach such a kind of wisdom as will tend to advance interest, and procure connexions; but still I must maintain that, in itself, and uncontrolled by moral principles, it is a despicable kind of wisdom; for it is always incompatible with the ingenuousness of a good mind. It inculcates a submission to many meannesses. It renders life a continued series of deceit: and, indeed, so far from esteeming such wisdom superior to that which we learn in books, I cannot help thinking it a more refined, and consequently a more execrable, species of knavery.

The morality of books is, therefore, necessary to give this subordinate wisdom dignity and value. It enlarges

the views, and induces us not to esteem our interest at a higher rate than our conscience and our independence. It enables us to join to the alluring qualities of an insinuating address the respectable ones of a manly spirit and unshaken integrity. He who sets out in life with a mind untinctured with moral doctrine, though he may probably attain success, can never deserve it, nor adorn it, nor enjoy it; but he who sets out in life with moral principles deeply fixed in his heart, though a deceiving and deceived world should neglect him, will find in his heart a source of joy, which the world, with all its riches and honours, cannot bestow.

But there is another objection raised against the efficacy of the moral instruction of books. The moralist is accused of requiring too much, and of suggesting ideas of excellence to his disciples at which human creatures can never arrive. With all his pretended knowledge of the heart of man, he is said really to be ignorant of it, and to derive his conceptions concerning it from beings who have not yet fallen. To learn such wisdom as will be really useful, say they, we must shut our books, where pictures are exhibited whose originals are not to be found in this sublunary sphere. The church, the porch, the lyceum, and the academy, furnish only imaginary notions. If you would attain realities, you are obliquely referred to the brothel, the gaming-table, and all the haunts of avarice, fraud, and vicious pleasure. These, they add, are the schools in which man is described as he really exists; and in these the knowing part of mankind seek and find that wisdom which is vainly sought by fools from the pulpit, or in the library.

It is true, that books do, indeed, represent things better than they are: but it is true, that, in doing so, they do what they ought. It is their praise, and not

their shame. They endeavour to raise human nature, and they succeed in the attempt; for, however bad the world may be, the extremes of wickedness are to be found among those who do not read, not among those who have been conversant in the doctrines contained in the moral philosophers; and whatever exalted excellence occurs in the world, is chiefly produced by men whose minds have been cultivated by moral instruction.

If things were to be described by the moralist merely as they are; if only such precepts were to be given by him as tend to teach the young mind how to deceive, and to practise those vices which abound in the world, public degeneracy and corruption would certainly increase to a degree which can hardly be conceived. Wretched indeed is a man without the assistance of a moral and religious guide; and wretched, and even infernal, would be the state of society, if books were not continually employed in checking our precipitate course to moral degeneracy. We can hardly imagine what an appearance society would assume, if books were precluded; because we can never experience any thing like it in these ages, when scarcely an individual arrives at maturity without receiving some instruction, either oral or written, primarily derived from books.

I have heard it objected to the great Addison by men of the world, that they could not approve his writings, because, as they said, he labours to render man what he never can be. I will venture to assert, notwithstanding this charge, that more good has redounded to the English nation from the lucubrations of Addison, than from the active labours of any one individual, however high his station and powerful his influence. The Spectators have been every where read throughout the British empire; and much of the learning and good qualities which have appeared among us since their publication has been derived from them.

No books are more popular, from the highest to the lowest orders; and that the British nation is not sunk to the level of some of its neighbours, is, in great measure, to be attributed to a book of moral instruction universally studied, in which things are perhaps represented better than they are, and the comparative dignity of human nature nobly vindicated.

It is from the erroneous idea, that very little advantage in the conduct of life is to be derived from books or moral instruction, that our English sermons, which abound in the best morality, enforced in the most powerful manner, are almost universally neglected. They are, indeed, bought by young divines as models for the pulpit; but they are little read in the closet. An unconcerned spectator would be led to suspect, from such a circumstance, that most men are insincere, and that there subsists a tacit agreement between them to deceive and be deceived. For many among them, who attend to and applaud a sermon as it is pronounced by the preacher from the pulpit, would almost blush to be found in their retirements with a volume of sermons in their hands. If they really believed the matter of sermons, it is of so very interesting a nature, that they must be tempted to read them with avidity; but the same unfortunate idea prevails, that, though the moral discourse may serve in its proper place to amuse an audience, it is not sufficiently efficacious to influence the conduct of life. It is often considered as a matter of form, which very good sort of people may attend to from motives of decency, and then return to their former conduct unaltered and unimproved.

The end which I have chiefly in view in submitting these remarks, is not only to recommend an attention to books and instructive discourses, but to produce, if possible, an alteration in the scope and object of that

attention. I wish readers to take up a book with a desire to receive from it moral instruction, and not merely literary entertainment. Every one of us, whatever be our improvements, is liable to relax in his principles, unless they are frequently renewed and strengthened by admonition. Fortunately for us, books of morality abound; and places, where instruction is given in the most solemn manner, and under the most awful sanctions, are almost daily open for our reception. But, alas! how few of us purchase and peruse a book with a sincere desire to be rendered better men; and how many attend to the preacher solely to gratify their curiosity, and derive amusement! Bad, indeed, must be the book and the sermon from which any man may not, if he will, receive some hint, which, when seriously reflected on, would lead to improvement. But our want of humility, and our idea that subjects which concern our worldly interest and pleasure are the only subjects worthy the anxious care of a man of sense, render all which the wisest men have collected for our guidance utterly abortive.

What are the books which men of business, and men of the world, chiefly regard? Such as have a tendency to facilitate the mechanical parts of their several employments; poor and mean things, in comparison with the sublimity of objects moral and religious. Yet all others they are too apt to consider as trifling and nonsensical; serving, indeed, to fill up the time of those who have nothing else to do, but not worth the notice of the man of sense, and of the world. From such modes of thinking originate narrowness, illiberality, and ignorance, the fruitful parents of every vice which can render the possessor miserable, and be injurious to society.

No. XXVII.

ON THE REFINEMENTS OF THEORETICAL CRITICISM.

I CANNOT help thinking, that the effect which a literary work is found to produce is the best criterion of its merit; and that sentiment or feeling, after all that has been urged by theoretical critics, is the ultimate and infallible touchstone to appreciate with precision the works of taste and genius. Theoretical criticism constitutes, indeed, a very ingenious species of writing; but before I can be really pleased with a poem or a piece of oratory, I must feel its excellence. I may be convinced of the merit of a work by a series of abstruse and metaphysical argumentation, and yet, on reading it, find myself greatly disappointed. There is, indeed, in all works of true taste and genius, something of that elevated nature, which cannot be pointed out by verbal description, which must be perceived by the vibrations it produces on the nervous system, which must be felt as well as understood.

The inference I mean to draw from this truth is, that they who have enjoyed the benefits of a good education, and improved their parts which were naturally good, may deserve the praise of good critics, when they pronounce on a work that it is good or bad, or make any particular remarks on its beauties and deformities according to their feelings, even though they should not be able or inclined to give such subtle and far-fetched reasons for their judgment as have lately appeared in some very ingenious writings of this age.

Those readers will not deem this subject unnecessary, who are informed, that even Mr. Addison has been refused, in the present age, the name and the praise of a critic. "It must not be dissembled," says Dr. Hurd, "that criticism was, by no means, his talent. His taste was truly elegant; but he had neither that

vigour of understanding, nor chastised philosophical spirit, which are so essential to this character. For what concerns his criticism on Milton in particular and as to his own proper observations, they are for the most part so general and indeterminate, as to afford but little instruction to the reader, and are not unfrequently altogether frivolous." But Addison is censured in good company, even with Bouhours and Longinus.

Some men are distinguished by a superior sensibility and a delicacy of taste, others for an acute and logical understanding: those are formed to excel in criticism and these in philosophy. The provinces are separate and it must be allowed, that philosophy has often invaded the province of criticism, than criticism of philosophy. Philosophy may, indeed, derive much and valuable matter from philology; but she will assimilate it to herself, and the whole will yet be philosophy. She must allow criticism to judge by a test the least fallible, when applied to works of imagination and sentiment,—the genuine feelings of improved and cultivated nature. I would compare an abstruse philosopher, when he considers the works of genius, to an anatomist, who will not declare a human body perfect and beautiful till he has examined its internal conformation; while the man of taste may be said to resemble a sensible spectator, who at first sight, and without any laborious investigation, pronounces a figure graceful in its symmetry, shape, and colour.

What, then, it will be asked, is criticism to be left for ever vague and indeterminate, and is there no standard of taste? I answer, that the feelings of the majority of men coinciding for a number of years in the same object, constitutes a standard sufficiently certain and uniform. Men are so like each other in the constituent principles of their minds, that the work which

has pleased the greater part, during a long time, will please the whole, if their minds are properly cultivated, and will please them for ever. And as to accidental differences in opinion, or deviations from this standard, they are only the characteristic irregularities which attend every thing sublunary, and do not invalidate the justness of the general decision. The persons who entertain them are pleased with the error of which they are unconscious; and, after all that has been said with an air of importance, errors in matters of taste alone are seldom injurious either to individuals or to society.

In truth, I think the philosophers arrogate too much, when they allow none but themselves to give sentence on the merit of a work of elegant literature. A polite and classical scholar, who has not immersed himself in the profundities of modern metaphysics, is in my opinion, completely qualified for the office of a critic. If, after reading a book, he pronounces, from the general effect of it on his sentiments, that it is good or bad, solid or superficial, elegant or vulgar, sublime or low; and if the sentence he pronounces is afterwards, or has already been, confirmed by the public voice; that scholar is so far a critic. And, indeed such criticism is far more valuable to the generality of readers, to serve and enlighten whom ought to be the scope of every writer, than speculative refinements.

At the same time, I would by no means disparage the admirable works of Aristotle. I have been delighted with the philosophical criticism of many writers of North Britain, and with the beautiful illustrations of ancient critics and philosophers given to the world by a Hurd and a Harris. All I mean to contend for is, that writers of this order should not depart from their proper sphere, that of philosophy; and, from a kind of literary lust of dominion, extend their empire over

that agreeable sort of criticism which has delighted and improved so many readers, and which has appeared so charming in the works of Longinus, Bouhours, and Addison.

As a vindication of Addison, I will cite the words of his late penetrating biographer: "Before," says he, "the profound observers of the present race repose too securely on the consciousness of their superiority to Addison, let them consider his remarks on Ovid, in which may be found specimens of criticism sufficiently subtle and refined; let them peruse likewise his Essay on Wit, and on the Pleasures of Imagination, in which he founds art on the base of nature, and draws the principle of invention from dispositions inherent in the mind of man, with skill and elegance, such as his contemners will not easily attain."

I have introduced these remarks with an intention to vindicate the liberty of readers and writers, who really might fear to give their opinions in general terms on the merit of a work, or on a passage of it, while their remarks, unaccompanied with a formal and abstruse disquisition, might be in danger of receiving the contemptuous epithets of frivolous and superficial: epithets which writers, ingenious indeed, but too much attached to metaphysical refinement, have ventured to bestow on that ornament of letters and of mankind, the chief writer in the spectator; an author, whose criticisms will live and flourish when the dry speculations, which censure them shall fall to decay, and be as if they had never been.

And with respect to the value and utility of those very subtle disquisitions in criticism which have distinguished the present age of literature, we may perhaps collect an idea of the degree in which we ought to estimate them, if we attend to the advice of a very judicious writer.

"I would advise," says a great philologist, "a beginner in this elegant pursuit,—the study of criticism,—to avoid subtle and far-fetched refinement, which, as it is for the most part adverse to perspicuity and truth, may serve to make an able sophist, but never an able critic."

No. XXVIII.

ON THE PERIODICAL ESSAYISTS.

I AM not in the number of those politicians who estimate national good merely by extent of territory, richness of revenue, and commercial importance. I rather think that pure religion, good morals, fine taste, solid literature, and all those things which, while they contribute to elevate human nature, contribute also to render private life dignified and comfortable, constitute that true national good, to which politics, war, and commerce, are but subordinate and instrumental. Indeed one cannot always say so much in their praise; for, after all the noise which they make in the world, they are often misapplied, and become injurious to every thing for which society appears, in the eye of reason and humanity, to have been originally instituted.

Under this conviction, I cannot but conclude, that such writers as an Addison and a Steele have caused a greater degree of national good than a Marlborough and a Walpole. They have successfully recommended such qualities as adorn human nature, and such as tend also, in their direct consequences, to give grandeur and stability to empire. For, in truth, it is personal merit and private virtue alone which can preserve a free country in a prosperous state, and render its prosperity desirable. How are men really the better for national prosperity, when, as a nation grows rich, its morals are corrupted, mutual confidence lost,

and debauchery and excess of all kinds pursued with such general and unceasing ardour, as seduces the mind to a state of abject slavery and impotence? If I am born in a country where my mind and body are almost sure to be corrupted by the influence of universal example, and my soul deadened in all its nobler energies, what avails it that the country extends its dominion beyond the Atlantic and the Ganges? It had been better for me that I had not been born, than born in a country where the human race is degenerate.

Moralists, therefore, who have the art to convey their instruction successfully, are the most valuable patriots, and the truest benefactors to the community. And among these I place in the highest rank, on account of the more extensive diffusion of their labours, the popular teachers of morality in periodical papers.

Of these, the Tatler is the first in the order of time who will claim attention; for those which preceded were entirely political and controversial, and soon sunk into oblivion, when the violence of the party which produced them had subsided. But the general purpose of the Tatler, as Steele himself declares, was to expose the false arts of life, to pull off the disguises of cunning, vanity, and ostentation, and to recommend a general simplicity in our dress, discourse, and behaviour. A book written with this purpose was sure to survive the transitory productions of polemic and political virulence.

Steele has mixed politics with morality; and, indeed, many of the first papers were of so heterogeneous a composition, that, while an attempt was made to please all tastes, there was scarcely matter sufficient in quantity of the same kind to satisfy any one. The introduction of news and political intelligence would be disapproved in this age; but, at that time, they

served to allure common readers, who could scarcely have been enticed by any other means, to give attention to subjects of taste and morality.

The papers soon acquired new lustre by the co-operation of Addison. Addison eclipsed Steele; but yet I cannot sufficiently admire the generosity of Steele, and his freedom from jealousy and envy. He felt Addison's superiority; but it seems to have excited no other emotions than gratitude and admiration. "This good office he performed," says he, speaking of the assistance which Addison gave him, "with such force of genius, humour, wit, and learning, that I fared like a distressed prince, who calls in a powerful neighbour to his aid: I was undone by my auxiliary." Addison, indeed, added gravity and dignity to the work, which has conferred on it a permanent value. The levity and the motley manner of Steele would not have entitled him to the attention of a succeeding age, though it might have pleased in his own day by its novelty.

The general state of conversation and of literary improvement among those who called themselves gentlemen, at the time in which the Tatler was written, was low and contemptible. The men who, from their rank, fortune, and appearance, claimed the title of gentlemen, affected a contempt for learning, and seemed to consider ignorance as a mark of gentility. The Tatler gradually opened their understandings, and furnished matter for improving conversation. It not only gave them information on the particular topics on which it treated, but also, by leading them to think on all that passed before them in a similar manner, insensibly superinduced a habit of ingenious and philosophical reflection. There was no longer a necessity of invariably recurring to politics; a subject which is in its nature contentious, and often tends to

sour the milk of human kindness. Indeed, it is said, that to divert the attention of the nation from political subjects, was one principal motive for the publication of the Tatler and Spectator. Whatever was the motive, the result was highly beneficial to the people at large, and is felt in its influence at this hour. Steele, though he was excelled by subsequent writers, certainly deserves that share of fame and gratitude which is due to the first projectors of every important institution.

Addison, who had appeared with peculiar lustre in the Tatler, was to shine again in the Spectator with still brighter and more permanent glory. The great charm of his diction, which has delighted readers of every class, appears to me to be a certain natural sweetness, ease, and delicacy, which no affectation can attain. Truths of all kinds, the sublime and the familiar, the serious and the comic, are taught in that peculiar style, which raises in the mind a placid and equable flow of emotions; that placidness and equability, which are in a particular manner adapted to give permanency to pleasurable sensation. A work which warms our passions, and hurries us on with the rapid vehemence of its style, may be read once or twice with pleasure; but it is the more tranquil style which is most frequently in unison with our minds, and which, therefore, on the tenth repetition, as Horace says, will afford fresh pleasure. Addison rejected that levity and medley of matter, which often appeared disadvantageously in a single paper of the Tatler, and usually wrote regular treatises on the most important and most interesting subjects of taste and morality. Such subjects will never be antiquated; but the strictures on the dresses and diversions of the times, whatever merit they possessed, could not have rendered the work immortal. There are, indeed, in the Spectator,

many papers of very moderate merit; but it could not be otherwise, when the publication was daily, and the whole number considerably more than half a thousand. Neither Addison's other engagements, nor his abilities, great as they confessedly were, could have allowed him to compose every speculation.

The Guardian has very properly been called a continuation of the Spectator. Its plan and its execution are in reality the same; though the editor, as Steele may be called, intended a little variety in the original institution. The instruction was intended to be conveyed in the character of a Guardian to the Lizard family; but by no means was the design consistently supported. "The character of the Guardian," says a sagacious writer, "was too narrow and too serious: it might properly enough admit both the duties and the decencies of life, but seemed not to include literary speculations, and was in some degree violated by merriment and burlesque. What had the Guardian of the Lizards to do with clubs of tall or of little men, with nests of ants, or Strada's prolusions?"

The Tatler, the Spectator, and the Guardian, claim the first rank among the periodical writers, not only because they led the way, which however is a great merit, but because they possess superior excellence, and have rendered that excellence most diffusive in its effect, by a popular mode of displaying it. Their example has excited several followers, who have obtained and deserved a very illustrious reputation.

With respect to the Rambler, if I have prejudices concerning it, they are all in its favour. I read it at a very early age with delight, and, I hope, with improvement. Every thing laudable and useful in the conduct of life is recommended in it, often in a new manner, and always with energy, and with a dignity which commands attention. When I consider it with a view to

its effects on the generality of the people, on those who stand most in need of this mode of instruction, it appears greatly inferior to the easy and natural Spectator. Those elegant and expressive words derived from the Latin, which are called by common readers hard words, and which abound in the Rambler, will prevent the greater number from persevering in the perusal. And, indeed, with all my prepossessions in favour of this writer, I cannot but agree with the opinion of the public, which has condemned in his style an appearance of pomposity. The constant recurrence of sentences in the form of what have been called triads by the author of Lexiphanes, is disgusting to all readers. But I will remind his censurers, that Cicero himself, in several of his works, fatigues the ear by a close of his periods almost uniformly similar. Not only the numbers, but the very words, are frequently repeated in a few pages. I will also take the liberty to add in his defence, that the introduction of so many unusual and well sounding words will gradually improve the English language, though it must necessarily circumscribe the writer's popularity. It seems, however, as if he himself recognized the fault of perpetual triads in his style, since they are by no means frequent in his last productions.

The Adventurer is an imitation of the Rambler. It is written with remarkable spirit, and with the benevolent design of promoting all that is good and amiable. The stories make a very conspicuous figure in it, and tend to diffuse its influence among those readers, who might probably have been deterred from the perusal, had it consisted only of didactic discourses, written in a style approaching to the lexiphantic. Triads were greatly in fashion when the Adventurer was published, and Johnson is supposed to have written many of the numbers. Great, indeed, are its merits in every view;

but I eannot discover in the diction the sweetness and the delicacy of Addison.

The World is written in a style different from all the preceding. There is a certain gaiety and gentility diffused over it, which gives it a peculiar grace when considered only as a book of amusement. That it inculcates morality with any peculiar force, cannot be said: but it gives many valuable instructions, without assuming the solemn air of a severe moralist. The World appears to me, when compared with the Rambler and the Adventurer, like Horace when compared with Juvenal. The philosophy of the World is the philosophy of Aristippus.

The Connoissetir abounds in wit and a very pleasant species of humour. The book, however, is rather diverting than improving; yet, under the form of irony, many useful truths are conveyed with great success. There is no elevation of sentiment, and no sublime discourses on religion and morality; but there is a great deal of good sense expressed with good-humoured drollery. The authors were by nature possessed of wit, and had acquired a very considerable knowledge of the classics. The comic writers, such as Plautus and Terence, seem to have pleased them most, and they have rather undervalued the serious writers of morality. In one part of the twenty-seventh paper there is an oblique censure of the Rambler. "This new-fangled manner of delivering our sentiments," says the Connoisseur, "is called writing sound sense; and, if I find this mode seems likely to prevail, I shall certainly think it expedient to give in to it, and very suddenly oblige the world with a Connoisseur so sensible, that it will be impossible to understand it."

Every one of these works is calcuated to promote good sense and virtue; and whatever may be the defects of each, the variety of their manners is well-

suited to the variety of disposition and of taste which occurs in the mass of mankind. They have been found experimentally to improve life as well as conversation. And, with respect to the improvement of conversation; "nothing is so proper for this purpose," says the solid Johnson, in his preface to Addison's Poems, "as the frequent publication of short papers, which we read not as study, but amusement. If the subject be slight, the treatise likewise is short. The busy may find time, and the idle may find patience."

No. XXIX.

A CULTIVATED MIND IS NECESSARY TO RENDER RETIREMENT AGREEABLE.

FEW are able to bear solitude; and, though retirement is the ostensible object of the greater part, yet, when they are enabled by success to retire, they feel themselves unhappy. Peculiar powers and elegance of mind are necessary to enable us to draw all our resources from ourselves. In a remote and solitary village the mind must be internally active in a great degree, or it will be miserable for want of employment. But in great and populous cities, even while it is passive, it will be constantly amused. It is impossible to walk the streets without finding the attention powerfully solicited on every side. Exertion is scarcely necessary. Objects pour themselves into the senses, and it will be difficult to prevent their admittance. But, in retirement, there must be a spirit of philosophy and a store of learning, or else the fancied scenes of bliss will vanish like the colours of the rainbow.

Poor Cowley might be said to be melancholy mad. He languished for solitude, and wished to hide himself in the wilds of America. But, alas! he was not able to support the solitude of a country village within a few miles of the metropolis!

I lately paid a visit to a friend, who has withdrawn from the hurry of business to enjoy the sweets of a rural retirement in the south of Wales. His house is situated on an eminence, which commands a beautiful prospect. At the bottom of his garden, which is laid out in a taste peculiar to himself, yet entirely conformable to nature, runs a small river, remarkable for the smoothness of its surface, and the clearness of its water; but, though the house is perfectly agreeable in situation, some have thought that the freshness of the air, the beauty of the scenery, and the silence of retirement, can by no means compensate the want of a neighbourhood: for, to say the truth, there is not a single house to be seen within a mile of the little solitary villa, except one poor cottage inhabited by the gardener.

Though I was at first, like the rest, much disposed to disapprove the solitude of my friend's habitation, yet, when I had resided with him a little while, and had enjoyed the calm and rational pleasure of philosophic ease, I became enthusiastically fond of sequestered life. It must, indeed, be confessed, that Hilario possesses some peculiar qualities which seem calculated to render solitude agreeable. He has a natural sweetness of temper, a refined taste for literature and music, and, at the same time, some relish for the common diversions of the country. But, though he spends the greater part of his leisure hours in the alternate amusements of his books, his harpsichord, his dogs, and his horses, yet he is never so happy as in the enjoyment of the conversation of a friend whose manners and sentiments are congenial with his own.

It must not be forgotten, that he derives much of his pleasure from a knowledge of botany and natural philosophy, which he acquired in the former part of his

life. His acquaintance with these sciences enables him to make great improvements in the cultivation of his garden, where almost every plant which is curious, useful, or beautiful, is brought to its highest perfection.

It might, perhaps, be supposed, from the seclusion of his life, that he is utterly unacquainted with the living world. He takes care, however, to inform himself of the topic of the day, by attending to periodical publications of repute and authenticity; and he is allowed to make most pertinent observations on the taste, manners, and politics of the present times. His remarks have always this peculiar excellence, derived, perhaps, from his distance from parties, that they savour of that liberal spirit which marks the true gentleman, and the citizen of the world.

The great evil of solitude is, that reason becomes weak for want of exercise, while the powers of imagination are invigorated by indulgence. The gloomy ideas of Popish superstition were derived from the cells of the monastery. Fanaticism and bigotry, melancholy and despair, have usually been produced in the cave and the convent. Happy in a mind furnished with ideas of every kind, Hilario is never at a loss for occasions to exert the powers of his reason; and can at all times divert his imagination from the horrors of the spleen, by the pleasing employments of literary pursuits.

The avocations of an active life shortened a visit which I would gladly have protracted. I return to the engagements of the world, supported by the soothing expectation that a time will come, when I shall be able to spend the evening of life in a sweet retreat, like that of Hilario.

With a virtuous and cheerful family, with a few faithful and good-humoured friends, with a well chosen

collection of elegant books, and with a competency, one may enjoy comforts even in the deserted village, which the city, with all its diversions, cannot supply.

No. XXX.

ON AFFECTATION OF THE VICES AND FOLLIES OF MEN OF EMINENCE.

It has frequently happened that men distinguished by their genius, have, from an unsettled habit of life, from an affectation of singularity, or from uncommon warmth of constitution, neglected the rules of prudence, and plunged themselves into the miseries of vice and dissipation. They who are but slightly acquainted with the lives of our English writers can recollect many instances of men of the brightest parts, whose lives, after an uninterrupted course of misery, have terminated under the pressure of want in the confinement of a gaol. They had been admired, and at the same time neglected; praised, and at the same time starved.

As the consequences of their imprudence are generally fatal, and generally known, a reasonable mind would scarcely believe that any should be found ambitious of treading in their footsteps when they err. Yet, such attraction has the brilliancy of literary reputation, that many a witling who pens a stanza while he should be engrossing a deed, looking upon himself as a genius of uncommon magnitude, thinks it necessary, in order to complete his character, to plunge into the excesses of drunkenness and debauchery. When his follies have thrown him out of his profession, ruined his health, and shut him up in a prison, he consoles himself with reflecting, that he shares the same fate which the great wits, his predecessors, have shared before him. He is happy even to be wretched, with an Otway, a Dryden, or a Savage.

This unfortunate conduct is owing to a mistaken opinion, too generally adopted, that vice is the mark of laudable spirit, and that spirit is the characteristic of genius. Prudence, caution, common sense, are, in the idea of many, the concomitants of dulness. The phlegmatic disposition of a fool, say they, can guide him through life in the straight road of prudence; but the volatility of genius is continually tempted to turn out of the direct path to gather flowers on the sides, to view every pleasing prospect, and to discover new ways through unfrequented labyrinths.

But it may be a reasonable question, whether this propensity to deviation be not a weakness, rather than a superior strength of mind; whether it be not sometimes the voluntary effect of pride and affectation; and whether not oftener caused by a restlessness of constitution, than by a mere energetic activity, or an acuter perception. Sensibility of mind, and fineness of feelings, are always the attendants of true genius. These, which by themselves constitute a good heart, when joined to a good head, naturally give a greater tendency to virtue than to vice; for they are charmed with beauty, and disgusted with every kind of deformity. Virtue, therefore, who is amiable in the eyes of her enemies, must have additional charms for those whose susceptibility of beauty is more delicate and refined; and Vice, who is loathsome in her nature, must appear uncommonly odious to those who are singularly shocked at all real turpitude.

Nor are there wanting instances, to prove that men of the most exalted genius can be men of the most unspotted virtue. Addison, the glory of our nation, was equalled in his abilities only by his piety, by the purity of his morals, the integrity of his heart, and the prudence of his conduct. Pope was a man of exemplary piety and goodness. Gay, though licentious

in his writings, is said to have been uncontaminated by the vices of the world; and though instances are numerous on the other side, yet these few are sufficient for the refutation of that prevalent notion, that great genius is incompatible with steady prudence and consistent virtue.

The folly of those who are only pretenders to genius, and who affect vice as essential to the character they assume, is as pitiable as it is ridiculous. Their egregious vanity will probably render all addresses to them useless: but they may take it as an infallible prediction, that dear-bought experience will soon induce them to wish they had altered their conduct, when it shall be too late to enjoy the benefits of an early amendment.

The fatal error of supposing vice the characteristic of spirit, has led many a parent to undo the child whose happiness he most wished to promote. The man of parts and fashion sends, indeed, his boy to school; but cannot bear that he should apply to books with any remarkable diligence, lest he should be mistaken for a plodder; nor that he should be singularly tractable and modest, lest he should be thought deficient in spirit; but ventures to form sanguine hopes of his future eminence, if he be the ringleader of every riot, and fortunate enough to gain at school the appellation of a Pickle.

Great writers have indeed indirectly patronised the cause of scepticism and immorality; but, if names are to have weight in this argument, to a Rousseau and a Voltaire we may confidently oppose an Addison, a Johnson, and many more in the retired walks of literary life, whom every Virtue, as well as every Muse, is proud to claim as her deserving votary.

No. XXXI.

ON THE INEQUALITIES OF GENIUS.

THE experience of every man who has devoted himself to literature will evince the truth of the remark, that there are times when the mind, however urged by necessity, is incapable of submitting to the confinement of application. The liveliest imaginations, and the strongest intellects, are sometimes bewildered in dulness and stupidity, and a Homer nods with all the drowsiness of a Bavius.

There are, in consequence of the unequal power of exertion which the mind experiences, inequalities of excellence in every author, whether ancient or modern. The most admired productions have some parts, in which not only no merit is visible, but which abound with faults. It can neither be supposed, that the failures arise from real and inherent inability, nor that they are voluntary. Their authors' acknowledged excellencies in other performances will not admit the former, and their solicitude for the success of their works must exclude the latter supposition. Such an effect can, therefore, be attributed to no cause but the unaccountable inequalities of the finest genius, at different hours, and in different situations.

The English can boast a numerous train of writers, who, in their several departments, have approached very nearly to the standard of perfection; but scarcely one of them can be named whose works are not deformed by compositions utterly unworthy of him. It is hardly credible, that the author of Paradise Lost could have produced some of those sonnets which pass under his name, but which bear no mark of his genius. Dryden, who wrote the Ode on St. Cecilia's Day, composed a set of wretched tragedies in rhime: the ode was, indeed, dictated by genius; but the tragedies arose from no inspiration but that which want supplied.

In this point, as well as in many others, there is an exact analogy between the moral and literary world. It has long been the complaint of the experienced, that no human foresight, no prudence, can at all times ensure prosperity, and avert ill fortune. Something still arises to baffle the counsels of the wise, and to counteract the intentions of the good. The Roman satirist has, indeed, asserted that Fortune is a deity of our own creation, and that he who submits to the guidance of prudence needs not the interposition of supernatural power; but experience proves the assertion to be rather the effusion of a rigid and affected philosophy, than the cool suggestion of well-informed reason. The observation of a sacred moralist, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, is more agreeable to truth, and has been confirmed by the repeated testimony of ages. Wisdom is often found guilty of folly, and ingenuity of error.

Of the fluctuation of mental vigour in the same individual, there is a remarkable instance in the great Newton. Of him it is said, that in the advanced period of his life, he was unable to comprehend his own works. That understanding, which once penetrated far beyond the limits of the visible creation, became so debilitated, as to be incapable of retracing its own progress: a memorable instance of human infirmity, sufficient to humble pride, and silence envy.

As merit cannot always ensure success, even in the exertion of its peculiar excellence, so is it by no means certain of obtaining a good reception in the world; for history and experience furnish many examples to prove, that wealth and power are not the necessary consequences of wisdom and virtue. To be wise and virtuous, may be learned from an Epictetus; to be fortunate, from others.*

* Fortunam ex aliis. VIRG.

It might, indeed, be supposed, that strength of intellect, accuracy of judgment, and extensive erudition, would either secure to themselves good fortune, or would at least be rewarded by the world; but it is an incontestable truth, that poets and philosophers, of every age and every nation, have been almost as much distinguished by their indigence as their ingenuity. Poverty and poetry are almost synonymous; while the unerring experience of mankind has reduced it to a proverb, that "fools have fortune."

The insufficiency of merit, and of honest endeavours, to the acquisition of fame and fortune, has given occasion to the discontented to repine, and to censure the economy of human affairs; but they who are conversant in the investigation of final causes easily perceive that such a dispensation tends to perfect virtue by the exercise of patience.

All sublunary excellence is, indeed, transitory. Not only the external goods of fortune, but the mental advantages, which are commonly represented as out of the reach of accident, are subject to decay and perpetual fluctuation. They who labour to ascend the heights of virtue and learning, often relapse in their passage, or fall at once from the summit when it is attained. If, then, neither wisdom, knowledge, genius, nor virtue, are stable and stationary, we must learn not to confide in them with presumptuous security, but to put our whole trust, where alone it can repose without danger, even on THE ROCK OF AGES.

No. XXXII.

MEN OF GENIUS DO NOT ALWAYS EXCEL IN COMMON CONVERSATION. [IN A LETTER.]

WHEN you were with me last, I remember you expressed your surprise that Varus, who has indubitable marks of true genius in his writings, appeared utterly

destitute of spirit and vivacity in conversation. You seemed at a loss to account for the dulness of a man whose pages are replete with wit and humour; and you were astonished to find, that he who had engaged in the deepest disquisitions with all the subtlety of argument, appeared unable to support a trifling conversation on the common topics of the day. You did not perhaps recollect, that great minds can exert themselves with full force only on great occasions. Either from pride, disuse, or natural inability, poets and philosophers are known to appear inferior in the arts of conversation, and the little decencies of common life to the illiterate beau, and the superficial female.

It has been said, you know, that they who are employed in sublime speculations learn to despise every subordinate object as unworthy their regard or cultivation. Where this is really the case, it is easy to account for the awkwardness of men of wit and letters; for it is impossible to bestow pains in the acquisition of what we despise: but your own as well as my experience will furnish instances of those who have thought it a misfortune not to be able to shine at the tea-table as well as in the schools. A man of this character, though he can trace a system through all its mazes, is often incapable of expatiating on the common subjects of a new play, a new farce, a new ministry, with tolerable accuracy.

One might naturally suppose, however, that when at last these exalted personages condescend to open their lips, something uncommonly excellent would come out; but we often, in other instances as well as in this, indulge our expectations farther than reason and experience seem to justify. The greatest men are still but men, and, in the common intercourse of life, are of necessity upon a level with the vulgar. I dare say, you remember a shrewd remark of a writer, whose

name I cannot recollect, That no great man ever appeared great in the eyes of his valet-de-chambre. In truth, many objects in the moral as well as natural world seem larger when viewed imperfectly and obscurely. The meteor which strikes the distant beholder with fear and astonishment, is found, upon a nearer view, to be nothing but a vapour; and the philosopher, who is the object of awe and veneration among those who never approach him, becomes, when closely inspected in the humble occupations of common life, little more than a common man.

Life has often been compared to a Drama, and the world to a Stage. I believe the subject we have been now considering will increase the resemblance. Various, indeed, are the characters when they appear on the public stage; but when they retire behind the scenes, and put off the glittering outside which fascinated beholders, the monarch, the hero, the philosopher, are found, in those common weaknesses which humiliate their aspiring nature, to be more nearly on a level with the peasant, than their pride is willing to allow.

It has been said, that one man is capable of excelling others in qualities superinduced by his own efforts, as much as the species of man surpasses the species of brutes. This indeed is apparently true; yet he who expects to find the most improved individuals uniformly excellent, knows little of human nature. A Grandison is scarcely less fabulous than a phœnix.

All sorts of excellencies can never be united in one man. The world is unreasonable when it expects that they who write well should always shine in the little arts of convivial intercourse. It is enough that their minds are engaged in subjects of importance, and that they are both able and willing to communicate their meditations to the public. Few have written

better than Addison; yet Addison was remarkable for taciturnity. He was, however, we are told, agreeable and talkative among select friends and men of letters. In truth, conversation cannot be long supported with spirit but among equals in abilities and attainments; and men of great genius and profound learning do not often meet their equals in mixed society.

No. XXXIII.

VERBAL CRITICISM UNDESERVEDLY DESPISED. [IN A LETTER.]

I CANNOT help thinking you were too severe in what you said against those critics who have employed themselves in verbal disquisitions. You well know, that ridicule can make things of acknowledged utility appear vain and frivolous. And, to tell you the truth, I believe you do not keep your exquisite talent for ridicule under that restraint which candour and moderation seem to require.

I must, indeed, allow that Verbal Criticism, like many other laudable pursuits, is apt to deviate into absurdity; when not under the regulation of reason and good sense. Inquiries into the works of nature are highly useful and pleasing; but even these have been perverted by ignorance and bigotry, and have produced those disgraces of the human mind, alchemy and judicial astrology. Investigations of the manners and institutions of antiquity are known to promote knowledge, by ascertaining ambiguous subjects, and to give pleasure, by gratifying a natural curiosity: these, however, have likewise degenerated into all those absurdities which form the character of the pedantic antiquarian, and the trifling virtuoso.

When you censure verbal critics, you certainly forget how much you are indebted to them. Believe me, you would never have had that general acquaintance with

the classics which you are known to possess, had you been obliged to toil through all the difficulties which the commentators, at the revival of learning, took such pains to remove. Rescued from the cells of monks, whose minds were as dark as their habitations, the manuscripts of ancient authors were full of errors and interpolations; and it was impossible to read a page of many celebrated writings, without being embarrassed with obscurity and impeded by chasms, which collation or conjecture only could supply. You may laugh, if you please, at the phlegmatic disposition of those who could go through the drudgery of collating a dozen manuscript copies, to find the proper place of a conjunction or an adverb; yet, however merry you may be on the occasion, you will be obliged to acknowledge the utility of the labour. I am aware, that these pains-taking students have been stigmatized with appellations of the lowest kind, and that they have been called porters in the republic of letters, and their works the scaffolding of literature: but let it be remembered, that though the greatest share of praise be due to the architect, yet will his plans and models, however ingeniously formed, avail but little, without the co-operation of the labourer and the assistance of the scaffold.

But, without insisting on the advantage derived from this kind of criticism in the illustration of ancient authors, I think it evident that it deserves cultivation, were it only because it contributes to ascertain and to refine our own language.

If you review the state of literature, you will find few writers who have attained an elegance in their own language, before it has been examined by grammarians, and reduced to fixed rules of analogy. Strength and vigour they may perhaps have displayed, since these are the genuine products of natural genius.

But to the most animated sentiments, and nervous expressions, they have been unable to add the grace of a correct and polished style.

If, then, we make pretensions to taste, and prefer elegance to deformity, and perspicuity to confusion, we must not refuse to verbal criticism that praise which we readily bestow on the other parts of literature.

The world has long been prejudiced against compilers of Dictionaries, and has viewed them rather in the light of elaborate plodders than of men of taste and genius; but candour must confess, that learning is more indebted to Dictionaries and Lexicons than to any other production whatever; since, without these, the ancient writings, those sources of literature, must have remained unintelligible. The English language has been enriched by the Shakespeares, the Miltons, the Lockes, of former times; but it may with truth be said to have been refined and embellished by the grammarians and the great lexicographer of the present age. It is from the labours of verbal critics that our language will receive the only excellencies it wanted,—purity and correctness.

No. XXXIV.

ON THE NECESSITY AND METHOD OF ENCOURAGING IN THE COMMUNITY THE PREVALENCE OF VIRTUOUS LOVE.

THE passion of love possesses an influence on life so extensive and important, that the moralist who takes it not into consideration is guilty of a great omission. Virtuous love is not only attended with the sweetest pleasures which this life affords, but is highly conducive to the improvement of human nature. Like the sun in the spring, whose warmth calls forth the latent powers of vegetation, love excites and cherishes some of those amiable dispositions which would otherwise have remained for ever in a concealed and a torpid

state. It often improves the understanding not less than the heart; and the transformation which Iphigenia is said to have produced in Cymon is neither unnatural nor uncommon.

But it seems to be a just complaint, that virtuous love is of late much less frequent than it has been, and than it ought to be. A very gross passion, which usurps the name of love, but which, instead of improving the heart or the faculties, degrades them both, is become more prevalent and more licentious. Where lust and libertinism greatly prevail, the hearts of the people at large are too debauched to be able to entertain virtuous and disinterested passion. Thus marriage is avoided as a restraint, or, if it be sought, it is sought from interest alone. But the greater part of women are not blest with the gifts of fortune. How, then, are they to be placed in a state, for which God, and nature, and reason, and virtue, evidently designed them? Their whole dependence for nuptial felicity, and, indeed, for the accomplishment of one great end of their existence, must rest on the power they possess of exciting a virtuous affection; a poor dependence, according to the state of morals in this age! for, with all the graces of personal beauty, and the superior charms of delicacy and sense, virtuous women will be slighted, and even despised, by the greater number of young men, who glory in having destroyed the budding blossoms of love in the pestilential air of a brothel, and who have sacrificed those first fine sensibilities, which return no more, to some infamous and impure prostitute. So the rose of beauty and of innocence is left to bloom and decay. He who should admire it, love it, and take it to his bosom, turns away to cull the noisome weed which stings him while he touches it, and ultimately poisons both his body and his mind.

I wish it were in the power of the moralist to restore the rights of female innocence and beauty, and to relume the lamp of virtuous love. The virtue and happiness of both sexes would be greatly augmented by such an event. It seems, indeed, that it would be peculiarly favourable to female dignity, upon which the good morals of the world greatly depend. For, whatever authority the men may claim, experience has uniformly proved that the affairs of the world are greatly influenced by the women. If their minds are properly improved, and their sentiments duly exalted, the great influence they possess will be directed to promote all that can render life more dignified and comfortable. But if they unite in increasing profligacy, or do not exert themselves to oppose it, that profligacy will be extreme. They should openly profess not only to pursue virtue and all that is laudable in themselves, but to value those men who most excel in truly honourable and laudable qualities. They may rest assured, that, when they cease to listen to licentious love, they will be courted with all the ardour and veneration of a pure and virtuous heart. The affections of such a heart are the warmest and most constant. They will rise in the ideas of the lover, and will appear to deserve the epithet of angelic, which he now often bestows on them merely in derision.

The neglected ladies may confide, that the mutual passion of the sexes is too powerful to be overcome by any human art. But it may be ill-directed, and taught to defeat its natural purpose. And here it must be confessed, that the rare appearance of virtuous love, and the neglect which virtuous women experience in this age, are in great measure imputable to the increase of female prostitution. Young men are allowed great liberty by the foolish indulgence of parents, and they cannot use that liberty in walking the streets

without being solicited to gratify: and pall those passions which were meant to give ardour and perseverance to a virtuous affection. It is but too probable, that the majority will listen to the syren song of prostituted vice; and the very first debauch will take off that keen edge of sensibility which would have led in time to a laudable connexion for life. In vain is some beautiful, accomplished, and innocent creature, recommended to the young heir by his parents, and her own beauty and merit. He declares himself averse from marriage. But why? From reason and principle? By no means. The truth is, that he has lost his sensibilities in the haunts of vice, and will not marry till a rottenness of bones, and a dissipation of fortune, have rendered a nurse and a dowry desirable. But, had he never fallen into the snares of the prostitute, he would have retained his natural affection, and could not have resisted youth, beauty, and elegance united. Some happy maid, who is now left to pine away in celibacy, would triumphantly have dragged him, as she ought to have done, a captive to the altar; but he has learned a degree of cunning in the regions of old Drury, which teaches him to defy beauty, and to despise the very idea of matrimony, any otherwise than as it may tend to the augmentation of his fortune. With his cunning he has probably gained diseases and debility, which are better adapted to raise a nausea in a woman, than to conciliate her affection. The inference I mean to draw from these remarks is, that the public good requires that the vigilance of the magistrate should be faithfully exerted in diminishing the number of prostitutes. Instead of which, it has been sometimes insinuated by the unprincipled politicians of this world, that they are politically necessary.

I cannot help thinking, that the restraints of law, which, through the interposition of avarice and ambi-

tion, have been laid on honourable marriage, have greatly contributed to discourage virtuous love, and to promote debauchery. The marriage-act, it is said, is justified by the example of foreign nations; but so also is arbitrary power; and there are few acts which, in their nature and spirit, tend more to despotism than the marriage-act. But, omitting to consider it in a political light, I shall view it for a moment as it affects the morals of the sexes. Men marry, and ought indeed to marry, from the influence of love, as well as from the dictates of prudence. Let us, then, suppose the case of two young and virtuous persons powerfully struck with each other's agreeable qualities, and deeply in love. If they could be married without delay, and without a tedious attention to a variety of troublesome and expensive formalities, it is highly probable they would immediately marry. If they have not self-command, the consequences of being obliged to postpone a legal union are such as terminate in shame and ruin. If they resolve to go through all the forms of the marriage-act, and to wait years for the accomplishment of their wishes (since poor human nature cannot consistently keep alive any of its better passions during a very long time), the lover cools, or finds new objects, or learns to gratify his sensual appetites where no restraints are required. The maid is forsaken, and the lover corrupted. Had they been married, both might have been happy and useful members of society. Marriage tends greatly to promote virtue of every sort; not only as it furnishes a lawful and natural mode of gratifying the passions, but as it calls forth industry, and renders a good character and the esteem of others desirable, because necessary to self-support, and to the support of a family. But though I will venture to assert, that the multiplication of restraints on the proper intercourse of the sexes naturally tends

to promote an improper intercourse (since an intercourse there must be), yet I will add, that alterations in an act, in which the domestic happiness of every family in the kingdom is interested, should not take place till after the coolest deliberation, and the testimony of long and decisive experience. Villains, there is no doubt, will avail themselves of a freedom from restraint, to allure the incautious female into matrimony merely for the sake of her fortune, which will perhaps be expended in supporting a harlot. Surely some precaution should be taken by human laws to prevent this cruel species of robbery. To rob a father of his child, and then to forsake, injure, ruin, and, in fact, murder, that child!—none but a father can feel with full force, the agonizing pang that rises on the reflection.

The best method of increasing virtuous love is to pay peculiar attention to the moral and religious education of both the sexes. Polite and frivolous accomplishments are often attended to in such a manner as to exclude the formation of virtuous principles. As to the education of girls in particular, it has been severely, though truly, said, that many of them are trained as if they were to be prostitutes by profession. They are often left unacquainted with economical management, with morality, with religion, or with any art that can render them useful and respectable. The higher classes are totally at a loss even in the first management of their offspring; and it is not to be wondered at, if they who know not how to be wives and mothers are soon degraded to the rank of harlots. A proper education, consisting of moral, religious, literate, and economical instruction, cannot fail to make them set a due value on themselves, and to enable them to pursue the methods most consistent with their dignity and happiness. She who is taught to pray to God with

constancy and devotion, and to value duly the testimony of a good conscience, will at once be rendered a fitter object of virtuous love, and less inclined to encourage any other. She will be respected as well as loved, as capable of becoming a valuable wife, a delightful companion, and not merely courted with the wantonness of transitory desire, to which a long indifference and disgust frequently and almost naturally succeed.

The women, it must be owned, are in this age greatly their own enemies. It is a just complaint, that the men are less sensible of their beauty and accomplishments than they ought to be. But it must be remembered, that such is the nature of man, that he despises every good which is too obvious and too plentiful. Ease and forwardness of address, and excessive familiarity, are established by the law of fashion; and neglect and contempt follow by the law of nature. A veil increases beauty, and reserve both exalts and preserves love by mixing it with respect. Where there is no respect, there is no virtuous love. What looks like it, is a devil in an angel's form, even lust: an indelicate name, indeed; but let it be remembered, that to bestow good names on bad things, is to give them a passport in the world, under a delusive disguise.

The understandings of women are, perhaps, in every respect, equal to those of men, when equally cultivated. It requires, indeed, no great share of sagacity to perceive that they are greatly interested in diffusing among the men the ardour and sincerity of a virtuous love. Their understandings and hearts are both well able to accomplish this important purpose. I offer only imperfect hints. They will improve upon them, and show their utility by giving them efficacy. I doubt not but that, upon reflection, they will be as desirous as

they are able, to stop the progress of female corruption, by means very different from the establishment of polygamy, by adding to the loveliness of their natural attractions, the respectable qualities which excite and secure esteem.

No. XXXV.

HINTS TO THOSE WHO ARE DESIGNED FOR THE LIFE OF WHAT IS CALLED A GENTLEMAN WITHOUT A PROFESSION.

To inherit an affluent fortune, and to be exempted from the vulgar cares of life, seems to be a lot peculiarly favourable to the advancement and the security of human happiness. The greater number of men are compelled by necessity to proceed in the same road, without liberty to deviate, or select the objects of their attention; but the rich heir beholds the world, and all that it contains, placed like a plentiful feast before him, and appears to have little else to do but to reach out his hand, and to take what he finds most agreeable to his taste.

Such a lot is usually envied; but it is really not happier than others. Providence is not so partial as, on a first and a cursory view, it appears to be. It seems, indeed, to establish a kind of equilibrium of happiness. An experience evinces, that caprice, false delicacy, artificial wants, vanity, pride, covetousness, and envy, usually render the lives of the rich and unemployed not in the least more pleasurable than the condition of the honest, healthy, and industrious poor.

It is, however, certain, that to inherit an independent fortune is in itself a noble privilege, and that it ought to be highly conducive to real enjoyment. I shall, therefore, beg leave to offer a few hints to those who are setting out in life with the distinguished advantage of a rich inheritance. As all the real benefit of such a

condition depends on the judicious use of it, if the moralist can point out means to secure that point, he may be said to contribute more to the improvement of the young man's estate, than if he procured a subscription to a loan, or put him in a way to make twenty *per cent.* of his money.

In the first place, I hope the young man thus fortunate, will not be so mistaken in his ideas of happiness, as to imagine that he can be happy in doing nothing. Universal and unvaried experience has proved, that he who does nothing is a wretch. The same experience has declared it probable, that he will not only be miserable, but wicked.

He must resolve to render himself useful, on two accounts: first, because it is a duty he owes the community, in return for the protection of his person and property; and, secondly, because it is a duty he owes to himself to be as happy as possible; which he will not be, notwithstanding all the real and pretended gratifications of riches, without useful activity. It will not be enough to make him enjoy the internal pleasures of reflection, merely to have dressed well, to have danced at a ball, rioted at a feast, presided at a horse-race, or driven a curricle or a barouche. Riding a showy horse, whipping a pair of geldings, or four in hand, through the fashionable streets, and sauntering in a stable, are, indeed, in the present age, some of the most glorious methods of spending the sprightly days of youth, when privileged by the early possession of a fortune. But when I see the carriage whisking by, and the rich or noble youth lolling on its side, or presiding on its box, I cannot help thinking the man at the tail of the plough a more useful, happy, and respectable member of society. There is not, indeed, the least impropriety in these pleasures, when pursued merely as a temporary relaxation; but all who know any thing of the world will agree with me, that

young men of fortune frequently, in these times, make grooms their companions, a stable their study, and the driving of a pair, or two pair of horses, the utmost extent of their activity, and the summit of their ambition.

But what, says the young heir, have I to do but to amuse myself? I have no trade, no profession, nor any necessity for either. Why may I not divert myself with any trifle which can excite my attention? But are you sure, I ask in return, that you have no necessary employment, to the performance of which, according to your abilities, you are as much obliged by duty, reason, honour, and conscience, as the labourer is bound to finish the work for which he is hired? I believe I can point out some laudable occupations in which you ought to engage, and in comparison of which, the driving of a vehicle, the vanity of dress, and ten thousand other vanities, will appear as the playthings of an infant, and the driveling of a dotard.

The first object of a youth who possesses affluence acquired by his forefathers, should be the improvement of his mind. Without this, whatever may be your money, and whatever your titles, if you have any, you will probably be a poor, mean, contemptible, and pitiful creature. You must read; you must learn to select your reading with judgment, and to reflect upon it with serious attention. You must acquire a taste for moral philosophy, and learn to curb your overbearing insolence, and all other irregularities of your temper and your passions; for it is a shame to make use of your riches and your grandeur merely to assume a license for degrading yourself to a brute. You must, in a word, have a liberal education; an education not only liberal in name, but really polite, learned, and comprehensive. You will find your nature raised by it, and yourself become a superior being, in comparison with what you would have been without it. It will

exalt you in real dignity more than a ducal coronet. In conjunction with wealth or high honours, or both, it will render you the blessing and glory of your country. Remember also, that if you slight religion, that Providence which gave you riches may punish your ingratitude by rendering them, as it often does, a curse.

After a youth spent in preparation, in the study of the classics, of moral and natural philosophy, and in the correction of the temper and the disorders of the passions, it will be time to enter on the proper employments of a mature age. You will very laudably desire to have a share in legislation; you will take upon you the office of a magistrate; you will be ready at all times to sit in judgment on the dearest rights of your countrymen as a juryman; you will willingly assume the office of guardian to public charities, inspector of public works, giving your time and your presence disinterestedly for the public benefit: a gift often more valuable than any pecuniary benefaction. You will use your influence to inquire into and correct the abuses of trust, to remove nuisances, to improve roads, to build bridges, to repair public buildings, to encourage charities, and to encourage all works of national ornament and utility.

These may constitute your public employments. You have many of a private nature scarcely less necessary. I would recommend it to you to live, if not the whole year, yet all that part of it which is not necessary to be spent near the senate-house, on your own estate in the country. Condescend to look into your affairs, and into all the more important matters of economy, yourself, not as a miser, but as a wise and benevolent citizen. This will employ you well, and will prevent injustice to your tradesmen, and embarrassment to yourself and your offspring. It will prevent that ruin, which, at this time, stalks over the

land, and diffuses desolation. You will study to improve agriculture: a delightful employment, and capable of producing great advantages; since agriculture has long been in the hands of those, who, from the obstinacy of ignorance, oppose all attempts to introduce new methods of cultivation. You will adorn your grounds with plantations, and not forget to plant the acorn, which is to supply your country with her future bulwarks, her best defence.

You will adopt something of the old British hospitality. You will, indeed, do right to select your guests; for indiscriminate hospitality tends only to promote gluttony, and discourage merit. Men of learning, and all good men, learned or unlearned, ought, for your own sake and for theirs, to claim your exclusive favour. Let your feasts be feasts where the mind, as well as the palate, may be delighted. Discountenance the profligacy of your neighbours by the silent but powerful reproof of neglect. Be not carried away by the fascination of fashion and grandeur, but love and cherish true merit and honest industry in all its obscurities.

Free from all professional avocations, you will have ample leisure to attend to your family; a field well fitted for the display of the best virtues and most valuable qualities. Every family is a little community; and he who governs it well, supports a very noble character, that of the *pater familias*, or the patriarch. The proper management of the various tempers and dispositions which compose large families, the reformation of abuses, the correction of errors, the teaching of duties, will by themselves claim a considerable share of your time and attention. But if you have many children, you need never want employment. The care and superintendence of them, in all the various duties and departments, might very honourably fill a life. You

must beware of falling into a common and fatal error among the favourites of fortune,—that of thinking domestic pleasures, cares, and duties, beneath their attention. Home is the scene of the best virtues and dispositions which adorn human nature.

Though you have no appointed profession, yet HOMO ES, YOU ARE A MAN, and let your assumed profession be to do good, of every sort, and in every degree, as far as you are able. The world abounds with evil, moral, natural, real, and imaginary. He alone who does all he can, wherever his influence extends, to mitigate and remove it, is the TRUE GENTLEMAN. Others are only esquires, knights, baronets, barons, bishops, viscounts, earls, marquisses, dukes, and kings.

No. XXXVI.

THE WANT OF PERSONAL BEAUTY A FREQUENT CAUSE OF VIRTUE AND HAPPINESS.

IT has been justly said, that no one ever despised beauty who possessed it. It is, indeed, a noble privilege to be able to give pleasure at sight merely by personal presence, and without the trouble of exertion. The respect which is paid to beauty, and the recommendation it gives to all our good qualities, are circumstances sufficiently advantageous to render those who have been blest with it sincerely grateful.

But it happens that the majority of mankind, if they are not deformed, are yet not beautiful. And this, after all, is a wise and benevolent dispensation of Providence; for, notwithstanding the just pretensions of beauty, I am convinced that the want of it is often attended with great benefit to individuals and to society. Man is naturally desirous of rendering himself, in some respect, valuable and amiable; and, if he has nothing external to recommend him, will endeavour to compensate his defect by the acquisition of internal ex-

cellence. But that the virtues of the heart, and the abilities of the understanding, contribute much more to public benefit and private happiness, than any personal grace or accomplishment, is a truth which needs no confirmation.

It is, indeed, a well-known fact, that many of the best poets, philosophers, writers, and artists, have been of the number of those who were, in some measure, prevented in their youth from indulging idleness and profligacy, either by some constitutional infirmity, or by the want of those personal graces which are the greatest allurements to a life of dissipation. Among a thousand instances, in confirmation of this truth, I will select that of Pope; to the deformity and imbecility of whose body we may attribute his early and constant application to poetry. Where there are powerful solicitations to the pleasures of sense, very little attention will be paid to the pure delights of contemplation, useful industry, and benevolence.

But it is more particularly my design to point out some advantages attending the want of beauty in women; a want which will always be considered by them as a misfortune. But all misfortunes admit of consolation; and many of them, under a judicious conduct, may be metamorphosed into blessings. While, however, I consider the advantages attending the want of personal charms, I must not be understood to undervalue beauty. If we admire the lifeless works of art, much more should we be delighted with the assemblage of living features, in which are united symmetry and expression. It is Nature's command that we should be charmed with her productions, both animate and inanimate; and our hearts are most willingly obedient, when she bids us admire beauty in our own species. Taste, fancy, and affection, are then all at once most powerfully assaulted; and it would be as unnatural as

it is in vain to resist the impulse of nature, by refusing our admiration.

But after our admiration is over, we shall find, when we exercise our reflection and judgment, what experience has, indeed, proved, that plain women are often entitled to the most esteem, though they do not excite the passion of love at first sight. It may appear paradoxical, but I will assert it to be true, that women who have no great pretensions to beauty are usually found, as the companions of life, the most agreeable. They are, indeed, for the most part, I do not say always, the best daughters, the best wives, the best mothers; most important relations, and most honourable to those who support them with propriety. They who aim not at such characters, but live only to display a pretty face, without one domestic or social virtue, can scarcely rank higher than a painted doll, or a block head, placed with a cap on it, in a milliner's window.

There is something of an irritability in the constitution of women whose minds are uncultivated, which, when increased by opposition, and confirmed by habit, usually produces a termagant, a shrew, or a virago; characters which, from the torment they occasion, may be said greatly to participate of an infernal nature. Nothing but reading, reflection, and, indeed, what is called a liberal education, can in general smooth this natural asperity. A woman who, by attending to her face, is led to neglect her mind, and who, besides, has been flattered in her youth by the admirers of her beauty, seldom fails, in the more advanced periods of her life, to vent the virulence of her temper, now soured and blackened by neglect, on all who have the misfortune to approach her. Her husband, if she has, peradventure, entangled some miserable wight, undergoes such torments as might justly rescue him from purgatory, by the plea of having suffered it already.

But folly and ignorance are almost as pregnant with domestic misery as a bad temper. And how shall she avoid folly and ignorance, with all their train of whims, fickleness, fears, false delicacies, vanity, pride, affectation, envy, peevishness, fretfulness, childishness, faintings, and weakness of nerves, who has spent all the days when she was young, and all the days she thought herself young, at her toilette, and in the study of meretricious arts? She found herself admired wherever she went, without saying or doing any thing admirable. She has, therefore, saved herself the trouble of forming a taste for reading, or a habit of thinking, or an ability to be useful. But beauty is a rose which soon withers. She loses the power of pleasing others; and, alas! possesses none to please herself, which can supply the place of flattery and pretended adoration. As her life began and continued in folly, so it ends in misery. If she married, she was useless at least, and probably a torment to her husband. If she continued unmarried, she possessed few qualities to render her acquaintance solicited, and none that could afford her a rational amusement in the hours of unavoidable solitude.

It may, indeed, happen that a beautiful woman may be educated with uncommon vigilance, that she may possess a remarkably good understanding, and as good a disposition. In this case her beauty will be doubly valuable, not only from its real excellence when combined with a cultivated understanding, but from the difficulty of attending to the graces of the mind amidst the cares of the person, and the flattery of foolish or interested admirers. It is certainly possible, that a beautiful women may be as accomplished as a plain woman; and I know that, in this age, there are many instances of it; but I am speaking of probabilities; and I think it much more probable, that women,

who are not remarkably beautiful, will be, in general, better furnished with those two necessary ingredients to domestic happiness,—a corrected temper, and an understanding adorned by culture.

Let us suppose a case, for the sake of exemplifying the subject, and let it be something like the following: A young lady, whose person is plain, cannot help observing how much she is neglected at public assemblies, and what universal attention is paid to beauty. She will naturally feel a desire to partake of the respect. She resolves in her mind the most likely methods of accomplishing her purpose. As to her features, it is in vain to think of altering them. She must draw her resources from her mind and her temper. She will study to collect ideas, in order to render her conversation agreeable. She will therefore read, and observe, and reflect, and remember. Her eager desire to gain esteem will stimulate her industry, and give steadiness to her application. With these she cannot fail to succeed. Her mind will be stored with knowledge, which will produce itself in conversation with all the graces of ease and elegance. The improvement of her mind will have a natural effect in the improvement of her temper; for every part of polite learning tends to soften and humanize the disposition. But she will also pay particular attention to the regulation of her temper; for she will justly argue, that envy and ill-nature will add distortion and ugliness to a set of features originally not worse than plain or indifferent. She will study to compensate her defects not only by rendering herself intelligent and good-tempered, but useful. She will, therefore, study the practical parts of domestic œconomy; those parts of humble but valuable knowledge, with which a proud lady, with a fine face, would scorn to meddle, lest she should be defiled and degraded. Thus sensible, good-

tempered, and useful, her company would be sought by men of sense and character; and, if any one of them should be disposed to marry, I have little doubt but that she would be his choice, in preference to a mere beauty, who has scarcely one excellent or useful quality to render her a good wife, mother, and mistress of a family. If sound judgment and correct observation direct the choice, the apple will be presented to her.

Suppose our plain lady married, her gratitude will be powerfully excited in return for the preference given to her amidst so many others who are talked of, and toasted, and admired. All her attention will be bestowed in making the man happy who has made her happy in so flattering a manner. Her understanding has been enlightened, and her temper sweetened by her own exertions. She will, therefore, be an entertaining as well as tender and affectionate companion. She has been accustomed to solid pleasures, for her plain person secluded her from vanity. She therefore seeks and finds comfort at home. She is not always wishing to frequent the places of public amusement, but thinks the day happily closed, if she can look back, and find no domestic duty omitted, and the partner of her heart rendered happy by her kind and conjugal behaviour.

Suppose her a mother. As she has furnished herself with ideas, she will be able to impart them to her children. She will teach them to entertain a proper knowledge of the world, and not lead them, by her example, to admire only its vanities. She will be able to educate her daughters completely, and to initiate and improve her sons. In the mean time, the fine lady, who has been taught to idolize her own face, and to dote on vanity, will neither be able nor willing to interest herself in such disagreeable matters as the care

of her noisy children, whom she almost detests, since they make her look old as they grow up, and are an impediment to her extravagance and dissipation. At the age of thirty or forty, whether of the two is the more amiable? Who now takes notice of the plain lady's face or the handsome lady's beauty? The plain lady, in all probability, is esteemed, and the handsome lady pitied or despised. But this is not all; for the one is happy and useful, the other peevish, burthensome, discontented, and miserable.

Juvenal, in his celebrated satire on the vanity of human wishes, laments that the accomplishment of our wishes would often be the cause of our destruction, and that such are our prayers, that, if Heaven were always propitious, it would often be unkind. Who wishes not beauty in his children? Yet beauty has been the bane of myriads, whom plainness, or even deformity, might have saved from ruin, and rendered useful, happy, and respectable.

I have thus attempted to console that very worthy part of the sex, who have not to boast the finest tincture of a skin, nor the most perfect symmetry of shape and features, and who are often not only neglected, but even ridiculed, by the unfeeling man of pleasure. It is surely a comfortable reflection, that, though Nature has treated their persons rather rudely (and the majority are so treated), her apparent malignity may be turned to a benefit; and that a very plain system of features may really be the cause of rendering them more engaging, and more permanently happy, as well as better able to communicate happiness, than the most celebrated beauty, whose mind is totally unembellished. She, indeed, may shine a little while in the fashionable sphere, while she exhibits the transitory gloss of novelty, but will soon drop her honours, like the gaudy tulip, which possesses finery without fragrance, and be no more remembered.

No. XXXVII.

ON AN EXCESSIVE AND INDISCRIMINATE LOVE OF COMPANY, AND AN ABHORRENCE OF OCCASIONAL SOLITUDE.

THERE are few conditions less desirable than that of the man who has no resources in himself, and who is totally dependent on others for his daily amusement. Yet there are great numbers who consider solitude as synonymous with misery, and who are ready to associate with any company, rather than be left alone. This weakness, for a great weakness it is, renders the mind base and mean enough to submit to any neglect, coolness, or contempt, in order to be admitted into a party, or not to be excluded from a dinner. It is the cause and the consequence of a feverish and restless state, totally inconsistent with solid comfort and rational enjoyment.

The love of company and of social pleasures is, indeed, natural, and attended with some of the sweetest satisfactions of human life; but, like every other love, when it proceeds beyond the limits of moderation, it ceases to produce its natural effect, and terminates in disgustful satiety. The foundation-stone and the pillar on which we build the fabric of our felicity must be laid in our hearts. Amusement, mirth, agreeable variety, and even improvement, may be sometimes sought in the gaiety of mixed company, and in the usual diversions of the world; but, if we place our whole happiness on these, we shall do little more than raise castles in the air, or build houses on the sand.

To derive the proper pleasure and improvement from company, it ought to be select, and to consist of persons of character, respectable both for their morals and their understandings. Mixed and undistinguished society tends only to dissipate our ideas, and induce a laxity of principles and practice. The pleasure it affords is coarse and vulgar. Indeed, it commonly *ends in* weariness and disgust, as even they are ready

to confess who yet constantly pursue it as if their chief good consisted in living in a crowd, amidst noise without mirth, and feasting without friendship.

Among those, indeed, who are exempted by their circumstances from professional and official employments, and who professedly devote themselves to a life of pleasure, little else seems to constitute the idea of it, but an unceasing succession of company, public or private. The dress, and other circumstances preparatory to the enjoyment of this pleasure, scarcely leave a moment for reflection. Day after day is spent in the same toilsome round, till a habit is formed which renders dissipation necessary to existence. One week without it would probably induce a lowness of spirits, which might terminate in despair and suicide. When the mind has no anchor, it will suffer a kind of shipwreck; it will be dashed on rocks, or sunk in whirlpools. What, indeed, is life or its enjoyments without settled principles, laudable purposes, mental exertions, and internal comfort? It is merely a vapour, or a state of torment, since it possesses a restless power of action, productive of little else but weariness and vexation.

I very seriously recommend, therefore, to all who wish to enjoy their existence, (and who entertains not that wish?) that they should acquire not only a power of bearing, but of taking a pleasure in temporary solitude. Every one must, indeed, sometimes be alone. Let him not repine when he is alone, but learn to set a value on the golden moments. It is then that he is enabled to study himself and the world around him. It is then that he has an opportunity of seeing things as they are, and of removing the deceitful veil, which almost every thing assumes in the busy scene of worldly employments. The soul in solitude is enabled to retire into herself, and to exert those energies which are always attended with sublime pleasure. She is enabled

to see the dependent, frail, and wretched state of man, as the child of nature; and incited by her discovery to implore grace and protection from the Lord of the universe. They, indeed, who constantly fly from solitude, can seldom be religious; for religion requires meditation. They may be said to live without God in the world; not, it is true, from atheistical principles, but from a carelessness of disposition; a truly deplorable state, the consciousness of which could not fail to cloud the gaiety of those halcyon beings who sport in the sun-shine of what they deem unremitted pleasure.

I may, I believe, assert, that the love of pleasure, the follies of fashion, and the extravagances of dissipation, are greater enemies to religion than all the writers who have endeavoured to attract notice by questioning the truth of Christianity. Many, it is to be feared, have lived and died in the regions of gaiety, without ever having felt a sense of religion. Prayers, sermons, churches, the clergy, and the Gospel, the external instruments of piety, were things which never struck them, and from which they received no more impression than a blind man from the exhibition of a pageant. To feel the fine sensibilities of devotion, it is necessary to commune with our own hearts, upon our beds, and to be still. If we had but courage to withdraw ourselves from the world, we should often find in our study, and on our knees, such pleasures as the world cannot give.

I may also add, that few will be found to display prudence or consistency of conduct who do not sometimes step aside from the tumult of the throng, to consider coolly their circumstances and situation. Life cannot proceed fortuitously without incurring momentary danger. Plans of conduct must be formed, precautions taken, errors retrieved, and the probabilities of

futurity considered. But all this requires thought, and thought retirement.

Not only religion, virtue, and prudence, will be promoted by occasional solitude, but a relish will be given to the rational enjoyments of a pleasurable life. Vicissitude is essential to every state of durable gratification. He who has spent a little part of his time in his closet, or his groves, will partake of the gaieties of the assembly with fresh delight; as a man, when he is hungry, finds an additional flavour in his daily food.

But it must be remembered, that, in recommending solitude, I mean only occasional solitude. There is no doubt but that man is made for action, and that his duties and pleasures are often most numerous and most important amidst the busy hum of men. Many vices, and many corrupt dispositions, have been fostered in a solitary life. Monkery is not favourable to human nature nor to human happiness; neither is unlimited dissipation. But cautions and remedies must always be applied where the greatest danger appears. And I think it will admit no dispute, but that, in this age and nation, men are much more likely to be injured by too constant an intercourse with the world, than by too much retirement and seclusion.

But nothing without moderation is durable or wise. Therefore, let there be a sweet interchange of solitude and association, of repose and activity. A few hours spent every day by the votaries of pleasure in serious meditation, would render their pleasure pure, and more unmixed with misery. It would give them knowledge, so that they would see how far they might advance in their pursuit without danger; and resolution, so that they might retreat when danger approached. It would teach them how to live; a knowledge which, indeed, they think they possess already;

and it would also teach them, what they are often too little solicitous to learn,—how to die.

No. XXXVIII.

CONSIDERATIONS ON THE ART OF PHYSIC.

We cannot help feeling a pleasure, mixed, indeed, with severe regret, while we look back on the antediluvian world, and read the fabulous accounts of the golden age. The absence of that natural evil, which has ever since infused into the cup of human felicity a bitter mixture, must have rendered a virtuous state of existence an uninterrupted pleasure, and heightened every actual enjoyment, by admitting the comfortable reflection, that present indulgence was not to be paid for by future pain.

But, alas! the golden age existed only in the regions of poetry. Moral evil soon made its appearance in an animal so imperfect as man, and had an immediate tendency to produce natural. The gratification of the animal appetites was, for obvious reasons, connected with pleasure; and, in order to prolong or improve that pleasure, men had recourse to refinement and excess. These not only superinduced disease, but occasioned an imbecility that rendered it more difficult to be removed.

Man, furnished by nature with a greater susceptibility of pleasure than was indulged to other animals, was possessed likewise of a superior sagacity, which enabled him to modify and heighten his enjoyments with all the subtlety of art. His boasted reason became the pander of his appetites. A taste for simple food and simple manners, the one the best preservative of health, the other of innocence, was lost amid the acquired advantages of civilisation.

The human body, even in the earliest ages, and

before the universal prevalence of luxury, was, indeed, exposed to various diseases. Its complicated organization rendered its motions easy to be retarded or obstructed by the unavoidable influence of an atmosphere. We find that animals, who approach nearly to a state of nature, are yet subject to a variety of distempers. The most useful auxiliary of man is known to labour under many violent disorders, though his food is a pure vegetable production, presented to him in its highest perfection, and unadulterated. In the infancy of the world, it may be reasonably concluded from the analogy, the body was produced in a stronger and sounder state, than after the lapse of many thousand ages, when vice has contaminated the very sources of population. Fresh from the hand of plastic Nature, the body was not only more beautiful and proportionate, but less disposed to admit morbid commixtures, and better enabled to expel them. Yet, even then, the effects of the weather, of accidents, of long fasting, or repletion, were necessarily felt, and were followed by disease.

Exposed to wants, to external dangers and internal weaknesses, the impatient mind of man soon applied itself to the invention of arts, which taught compendious methods of supply, of defence, and of remedy. The use of iron, once discovered, gave him the superiority of a more elevated order of beings over those to whom it continued unknown; and the dominion which he acquired over the brutes exalted him still higher in the scale of dignity and power. But though labour was facilitated and security obtained, yet neither mechanical ingenuity, nor the protection gained by adventitious power, could allay the heat of a fever, or assuage the violence of pain; evils which attacked him in the hours of his repose, and found their way to him through the walls of the rampart or the castle.

The personal feelings of the sufferer, and the anxiety of those who were most nearly allied to him by the ties of blood and affection, incited the spirit of industry and research to procure alleviation. Charms and amulets were the first expedients suggested to the rude mind of the barbarian, ever more inclined to indulge the delusive hopes of superstition, than to listen to the voice of sober reason. But even these expedients, inadequate as they appeared, were yet often productive of beneficial effects. Many disorders, if not quite imaginary, derived much of their violence from the force of imagination. From the same source their cure was to be obtained. A bead worn a certain time, an insignificant ceremony performed with the rituals of superstition, could not effect any immediate alteration in the animal economy; but they gave ease to the mind of the sufferer, and, by restoring cheerfulness and spirits, often became really efficacious.

Nor were these fanciful methods of cure confined to the ages of ignorance. They who are acquainted with vulgar life as it appears at present, and the manners of those who reside at a distance from the capital, must have observed a variety of superstitious practices scarcely to be equalled in absurdity by the rudest nations. There are, for instance, many methods of curing an ague, without internal or external application. The poor patient has recourse to some aged matron, who, like the god of physic, professes the arts of medicine and prophecy; and he seeks not the aid of the regular practitioner, while he can obtain the supernatural assistance of a charm. He waits without reluctance for relief; the disorder decreases by the effects of time and constitutional vigour; the credit of the cure is given to the charm: he recommends it in his turn to others; and superstition in medical matters prevails in an enlightened age, amid all the triumphs of truth and philosophy.

Medicine was, however, early cultivated as an art founded on certain principles, and confided in by the sensible part of mankind, as the most probable means of relief. The slaughter of victims for sacrifice, and of animals for food, gave an opportunity of inspecting the parts of organized bodies, which bore a great analogy to the human constitution. Chirurgery and physic derived from this source equal opportunities for improvement. Indeed, it is presumed, that chirurgical operations were the first efforts of the medical art. External maladies, as they were most visible, called more immediately for relief; and external application was the easiest and most obvious to reflection. Both branches of the art, long after its invention, were united in the same professor, as they usually are at present among our rural practitioners. There is, indeed, sufficient reason for their combination, since a skill in them must, in great measure, result from a knowledge of the same principles; yet, at the same time, each of them will probably be carried to a greater height, when separately pursued by different persons. This, indeed, seems to accord with the decisions of experience; for, of those who have arrived at singular eminence in either of these arts, few have chosen to invade the province of the other. Cheselden did not prescribe in a fever, nor did Radcliffe undertake an amputation.

The Greeks, whose happy polity was admirably adapted to call forth all those fine qualities of the mind with which they were singularly furnished by nature, advanced not only the ornamental arts of painting, poetry, and sculpture, to perfection, but cultivated the useful one of physic with a success which has greatly assisted the moderns in making their boasted improvements. The writings of Hippocrates, though, for obvious reasons, slighted by the busy prac-

titioner, are held in high estimation by the learned physician. And if the prescriptions of the Cöan seem to want simplicity, and fail of their effect at this period, and in our climate, yet have they been of essential service to the art, by introducing what is called the dogmatical method in the place of the empirical; and their failure as remedies may be reasonably attributed to the alterations which the human frame is found to undergo in the revolution of ages, by a general change of dietetic regimen; by removing to different climates, and incorporating with races of men, who seem to be distinguished from the rest even in their bodily organization.

But though the writings of the ancients, of the Grecian Hippocrates and Galen, and of the Arabian Rhazes and Avicenna, are often talked of by the modern professor, yet are they seldom read. Experience, which, after all, is the surest test of utility, seems to justify the neglect. Practical medicine is less indebted to books than any other liberal art. The occasional varieties of distempers are infinite; their complications disguise them, and often produce a new species, or one that has never been described with accuracy. He who has recourse to systems, is at a stand when he sees a symptom unobserved before; but he who studied nature in the original, knows how to change his intentions, and adapt endless remedies to the endless variety of disorders. Yet theory should certainly go before practice in the preparation for this profession; and the physician who has not read a great deal in his youth, will appear not only illiberal, but be grossly ignorant of his art.

From many similar instances, Radcliffe is usually selected to prove, that great practical skill, as well as fame, in this art, is attainable merely by the aid of experimental physiology. He, indeed, it was said,

was a genius in medicine. To books he owed but little, and was ambitious to appear less indebted to them than he really was. He knew, it is true, that experience, the safest guide after the mind is prepared for her instructions by previous institution, is apt, without such preparation, to degenerate to a vulgar and presumptuous empiricism. He therefore laid a foundation of general and liberal knowledge derived from books, on which he erected a noble superstructure, with materials supplied by observation. He certainly possessed, in an eminent degree, a sagacity which Nature had bestowed. But it is said he was not a man of profound and accurate science. Perhaps, like many of his profession, he owed a great part of his fame and fortune to the caprice of fashion, and the concurrence of favourable circumstances. If he did not, by his own discoveries, advance the boundaries of knowledge, he took the wisest method, in his own opinion, for its improvement at his death, by the most ample benefactions to the university of Oxford. Through the wisdom of their application, he still continues to promote the benevolent purposes of the medical profession, in a general infirmary raised there by his posthumous bounty. Science gratefully attributes to the same source a library and observatory, happily placed in a centrical situation, whence the streams of knowledge, like the blood circulating from the heart, may be generally diffused. Oxford has, indeed, been long in possession of advantages favourable to the study of theoretic physic, but scarcely afforded any opportunities for practical information, till the erection of the Radclivian Infirmary. And now, since the clinical lecture is established in it, the students, I hope, will no longer be constrained to seek improvement in the hospitals of the capital, or at a remote university.

Academical honours are conferred on this profession,

and it commonly leads to wealth and popular esteem; but it was not so honourable among the Romans as among us and all the modern nations of Europe. It was commonly in the hands of slaves, and Antonius Musa is almost the only physician, in the golden age of learning, who is honourably mentioned. With respect to the celebrated Celsus, though a most elegant writer, he is supposed to have flourished at a later period, and under Tiberius. He was not, indeed, a professed physician. He did not practise physic, but studied it as a liberal scholar in pursuit of universal knowledge. He wrote on philosophical subjects, on civil law, on the military art, and on agriculture. His treatise de Re Medicâ formed but a small part of his ingenious labours, and is by many considered rather as a translation than an original composition. The honour paid to him was paid to the scholar, and not to the physician only. But in whatever light the profession was formerly viewed, it now possesses the rank and esteem which it deserves. Our physicians have usually united polite learning with physiological knowledge. Many besides Linacre, Mead, Freind, and Akenside, have been no less celebrated in the schools of humanity than of science, and have been favoured by Apollo as much in their poetical as in their medical capacity.

Harvey, from whom is derived one of the noblest discoveries of modern philosophy, has greatly contributed to promote among physicians the cultivation of polite literature, together with the skill peculiar to the medical profession. By instituting an annual Latin oration, he has rendered a knowledge of the elegance of that language necessary to those of the faculty who are desirous of being distinguished as men of taste. As it might fall to the lot of any individual to speak at the College in Warwick-lane on St.

Luke's-day, each has been solicitous of retaining that classical learning which is too often forgotten, even by men of sense and judgment, soon after their emancipation from scholastic restraint. In pursuit of this end, they have formed a taste for classical works, and have been the patrons, the admirers, and the composers, of the most elegant productions. Indeed, in no order are there to be found individuals better informed, more polite, humane, and ingenious, than among the physicians.

At the same time it is but just to add, that there have been great numbers, and some among them not unpopular, who are distinguished only by superior avarice, impudence, folly, ignorance, and affectation; by qualities which, though they can hardly fail to render them fashionable in some districts of an overgrown metropolis, are in themselves effeminate and despicable.

It must be confessed, that many of those in a subordinate rank, whose business it is to combine and administer medicines according to the prescription of others, have, by the benefit of long observation, acquired real skill; and, though they have not to boast the advantage of a very liberal education, are yet justly esteemed as experimental physicians. These constitute a very numerous class in the community; and as they are commonly appealed to in the first instance, and entirely depended upon by the middle and inferior ranks, their medical influence is, on the whole, more extensive than that of those who hold a higher place in the national estimation.

When we turn our attention to the lowest order of practitioners, empirics, and pretenders, we see this noble art most disgracefully perverted. It is, indeed, much to be lamented, that the inferior and more numerous classes of mankind, who are most exposed

to accidents, and who have the fewest alleviations, are constrained by indigence to seek relief from men who have no other preparation for the exercise of this important art, but the humble employment of macerating drugs in a mortar, tying labels to the necks of phials, conveying medicines to patients, sweeping a warehouse, or kindling the fires of a laboratory. Such are often the most daring in the treatment of maladies; for ignorance is naturally presumptuous. Charity, has, however, stept in to remedy the evil; and numerous hospitals scattered over the face of our country, have at once afforded an extensive field for the exertion of beneficence, and the best schools for the improvement of medicine. In these places skilful physicians preside, and the poor have the advantage of regular attendance, of fresh and unadulterated medicines, of proper diet and cleanliness, in a manner highly favourable to cure, and which can hardly be surpassed by the conveniencies of opulence.

Like the pretenders to inspiration in religion, there are many who boldly enter on the practice of this art totally destitute of preparatory instruction, and who make a merit of their defect. Without even those few lights which may be occasionally obtained in the course of a servile apprenticeship, they assume all the importance of sufficiency, and dictate with an oracular confidence. Against those vultures of mankind, against those harpies of society, who scatter pain and death around under pretence of affording relief, and who, for the sake of supporting an unbecoming parade in life, not only delude, but destroy those who apply to them as to friends, under the pressure of the heaviest calamities, every honest mind must feel an indignant sentiment. The loss occasioned by the deceiver who preys on the possessions of his fellow-creatures, may be repaired by subsequent industry or

good fortune; but deception in this instance, is usually followed by destruction.

But how shall an evil, thus generally felt and complained of, be obviated, without an infringement of civil liberty; that boasted privilege, of which we are sometimes more jealously tenacious than of health and life? Admonition is ineffectual; for of those who suffer, few have not been apprised of the danger of trusting to empiricism.

The progress of empirical fame and success is easily traced, though not easily retarded. A powerful medicine is exhibited to some wretched individual, whose indigence induces him to be grateful for the notice and assistance of the ignorant. If his complaint is removed, as it might otherwise have been by the silent operation of time, he is triumphantly dragged forth to public view, and his name is added to attest the wonderful efficacy of the pretender's nostrum. The regular practitioner is insulted. Facts speak for themselves, and even men of sense hear and believe. The gaping crowd press round the mountebank, and swallow the dose of death with avidity, led on by the sunshine of delusive hope, like the poor fluttering insect allured to its own destruction by a deceitful blaze.

The wisdom and authority of the legislature might indeed lessen, or remove the evil. But it has never yet interfered, not only from an unwillingness to multiply restraints in a free country, but, perhaps, from a doubt whether some equivalent advantage may not arise from the liberty of attempting medical experiments. It is a truth somewhat mortifying to the regular votaries of science, that many of the most important discoveries have been made by the ignorant, and by chance. Those who have been taught to adhere to systems, are sometimes too much attached to the straight and

known path, to permit themselves to venture even on proper deviation; while the uneducated experimentalist, a stranger to the prepossessions unavoidably derived from learning, is almost sure to acquire the merit of originality. Unacquainted with the paths of those who have gone before, he is under a necessity of pursuing a track of his own. He is commonly bewildered, it is true; but yet it sometimes happens that he finds out a shorter or more agreeable road. In the infinite trials which his boldness instigates him to make, he blunders on a useful discovery, which would never have been known to the more expert and cautious. Unfortunate individuals suffer in the course of his inquiries, but the community at large is sometimes benefitted by an accession to experimental knowledge.

In no profession is it more desirable that there should be examinations previous to a license to practise. The want of a strict examination will render this profession low and contemptible, which was once highly and deservedly honoured.

It was, indeed, natural that medicine should be highly honoured, and its first inventors or improvers exalted to gods and demi-gods. As life itself is of small value without health, no wonder the restorers of health were ranked among the bestowers of life. The profession ought always to obtain a high rank in the scale of civil subordination. In this instance the moderns act more wisely than the ancient Romans, if there is truth in the maxim, that honour is the nurse of arts.

It is, however, greatly to be regretted, that popular esteem is often misplaced, and rather tends to encourage bold, presumptuous, and unblushing ignorance, than to raise merit from the vale of obscurity. Fashion, it is allowed, has contributed more to the establishment of many celebrated physicians, than any superiority of knowledge that they possessed. This

popularity, however, has sometimes been the cause of that merit, of which it ought to have been the effect. It has given men of moderate abilities and attainments such numerous and extensive opportunities of improving by experience, as could not be obtained by the able, yet unemployed.

Fashion may be allowed to rule with absolute sway in her proper province, in the *mundus muliebris;* but let her not dictate in matters so important as the means of restoring health. Among physicians of integrity and liberal education, let her select whom she pleases; but let her not set aside the votary of science and philosophy, to ask the advice of the needy, the illiterate, and bold empiric; or of the superficial pretender to the GRACES, without either the virtues or the sciences necessary to his profession.

No. XXXIX.

ON THE MEANS OF RENDERING OLD AGE HONOURABLE AND COMFORTABLE.

IT is a melancholy consideration that man, as he advances in life, degenerates in his nature, and gradually loses those tender feelings which constitute one of his highest excellencies. The tear of sensibility, said Juvenal, is the most honourable characteristic of the human race.

Whatever real pain may sometimes be occasioned, by sensibility, is in general counterbalanced by agreeable sensations, which are not the less sincere and soothing because they do not excite the joy of thoughtless merriment. The anguish of the sympathetic heart is keen; but no less exalted are its gratifications. Notwithstanding all that has been said on the happiness of a stoical disposition, every one who has formed a true estimate of things will deprecate it as a curse that degrades his nature. It is the negative

happiness of the dullest of quadrupeds, doomed to the vilest drudgery. Who would wish to be a Boeotian, whose lot had fallen in Attica?

Wretched, however, as is the state, when the heart ceases to feel the quick vibrations of love and pity, we are all hastening to it by that law of our nature which obliges us, when arrived at a certain point of perfection, to recede with retrograde rapidity from all that gave us the power of pleasing or receiving pleasure. But if old age were attended only with the deprivation of amiable qualities, the loss of sensibility might often be esteemed a happiness to the individual, as it would prevent him from feeling one of the greatest of natural and undeserved calamities. But the truth is, the absence of all that is lovely is sometimes supplied by all that is odious; as in the season of winter, the verdure and music of the forest are not only no more, but are succeeded by the howling of the blast, and the dreary prospect of nakedness and horror. Old age, though dead to many pleasing sensations, is still feelingly alive to bodily pain.

Of these evils, part is derived from nature, and is inevitable, and part from an erroneous conduct, which may be regulated by reason and philosophy.

When by age the body becomes debilitated, langour or pain must necesarily ensue. Bodily infirmities gradually impair the strength of the mind. Uneasy sensations, continued for a long time, sour the native sweetness of the temper. And the peevishnesss, the moroseness, and the severity, which characterize the last stage of life, however disgustful, are to be palliated, and no more deserve to be censured as voluntary faults, than the aching of the joints. They are the natural result of mental pain, and follow from a wounded mind, no less spontaneously or unavoidably than blood gushes from the incision of an artery. They

disturb tranquillity, and poison convivial enjoyment; but they ought to be patiently borne with, if not from motives of humanity, yet from the consideration that the day is not far distant when we shall stand in need of the same indulgence. And we may hereafter experimentally know how cutting to the heart are the impatient reproaches of those who are bound by the ties of conjugal, filial, and domestic duty, to soothe us under the pressure of calamity, and, as the pious poet expresses it, to rock the cradle of declining age.

But experience proves, that old age is not always attended with natural infirmity. Original strength of constitution, or habitual temperance, often produce a green old age. In this case, the odious qualities usually attributed to that period are without excuse. Proportionate improvement should be the effect of long observation and experience. The vice of avarice, the characteristic distinction of the last stage of life, is then more than ever unreasonable. It is no less absurd, as it has often been said, than to provide a greater quantity of stores, the nearer the voyage approaches to its conclusion. It is also the source of many other detestable dispositions. It habituates the heart to suffer the sight of woe without commiseration; because pity prompts to relieve, and relief is attended with expence. Hardness of heart, like all its other tendencies, is increased by voluntary indulgence; and he who has long disregarded the happiness or misery of those who were allied to him by the common tie of humanity, will soon become unkind among his nearer connexions, cruel to his family and friends, and a self-tormentor.

Another quality, which causes the old man to be avoided by those who are most capable of affording him amusement, is an unreasonable austerity of manners. A stranger to the feelings of youth, and forget-

ful that he once was young, he judges even the innocent sallies of lively spirits and a warm heart, by the severest dictates of rigid prudence. His judgment, however, he finds is little attended to by those who are addressed on all sides by a more alluring voice. He becomes impatient and querulous. He condems every thing that is produced in the present times, and extols the fashions, the diversions, the dress, the manners, the learning, the taste, that prevailed in the days of his youth, and which appeared to him superior to those of the present times, solely because his powers of perception were then more lively and acute; the very reason why the present appear with such irresistible charms in the eyes of his grandson.

For the natural evils of old age, relief is to be sought from the physician rather than the moralist. But philosophy can assuage the pain which it cannot cure. It can suggest reflections, which operate like balsam on the wounds of the mind. It can teach us to bear those evils which it cannot remove, and, by calling forth our powers of resistance, enable us to alleviate the load.

All, however, are not capable of receiving the benefits of philosophy. Few, but those whose understandings have been cultivated, and affections refined by liberal education, are able to understand or profit by the wise precepts of an Epictetus or a Cicero. Of still greater efficacy than the philosophy of these or any other writers, RELIGION steps in to infuse an ingredient into the bitter cup of life, which never fails to sweeten it, and which is adapted to the taste of every human creature.

Religion, indeed, is able of itself most effectually to dissipate the clouds, and to diffuse a sun-shine on the evening of life. But to those who are conversant in literature, the celebrated treatise of Cicero on old age,

may be collaterally recommended as affording solid consolation. Many moral treatises, however just and pleasing they may appear on the perusal, are of little use in the conduct of life, and terminate in speculative amusement. But the Treatise on Old Age prescribes rules, and suggests ideas, which, if permitted to influence practice, must render that period of life truly pleasing and honourable. Every old man who wishes to be wise and happy, and consequently an object of respect, should turn it over, as Horace advises the student to peruse the Greek volumes, by day and night. Nor can an ignorance of the Latin language be pleaded in excuse for the omission, since the elegant translation of Melmoth has preserved all the meaning of the original, together with a great share of its grace and spirit.

The indigent and the uninstructed cannot enjoy the additional benefit of pagan wisdom; but they have the comfort to know, that evangelical philosophy is fully adequate to the cure of mental disease, and at the same time requires neither extraordinary abilities, nor the opportunities of learned leisure, nor the toil of study. An attendance upon the offices of religion, and on the duties of charity, at the same time that it fills up the vacant hours of superannuated life with that cheerfulness which ever attends laudable employment, tends to inspire ideas of patience and resignation. A devotional taste or spirit will afford the most lively enjoyments. The turbulent pleasures of youth may be succeeded by a religious fervour; by a gentle flame which is capable of warming the cold blood of age, and of affording satisfactions similar in degree to those of more youthful passions, without their danger or criminality.

Thus may the dignity of age be supported: and upon its dignity greatly depends its happiness. It is that alone which can repel the insolence of youth, too

often instigated, by the levity of thoughtless health, to forget the reverence which among the ancients was thought due to the hoary head. It is really lamentable to observe, in many families, the aged parent slighted and neglected, and, like an old-fashioned piece of furniture, or useless lumber, thrown aside with contempt. Such treatment is disgustingly unnatural; but it is not easily to be avoided, where there is no personal merit, no authority derived from superior wisdom, no goodness of disposition to compensate the want of other attractive qualities. Tenderness and affection may be patient and assiduous; but who would not rather command the attention of respect, than excite the aid of pity? For the sake, however, of domestic happiness, it should be remembered, that the authoritative air of wisdom must be tempered with a sweetness of manners; and it will be found, that the reverence which does not exclude love is always the most desirable.

To preserve the sensibility of youth at an advanced period is difficult, because reason and philosophy, it is to be feared, can contribute little to its continuance. The loss of it is a natural consequence of decay. Much of the milk of human kindness, as it is often called, flows from a fine contexture of the nerves; a contexture which is broken, and a subtilty which is destroyed, by long duration.

Excess, however, precipitates the effects of time. Temperance in youth, together with the other advantages of that happy period, will protract its sensibility. And among the many arguments for early wisdom, this must have great weight,—that wisdom in youth is usually followed by happiness in age.

Perhaps nothing may contribute more to prolong the amiable dispositions of youth, than the retaining a taste for its innocent amusements. We often grow

old in our sentiments before we are stricken in years. We accustom ourselves to melancholy ideas of gradual decay, and, before we are incapacitated for enjoyment, renounce the innocent satisfaction which we might partake. Pleasurable ideas, no less than painful, are caught by sympathy. He who frequents the circles of youth and cheerfulness, will find himself involuntarily inspired with gaiety; he will for a while forget his cares; his wrinkles will be smoothed, and his heart dilated. And though he will not experience the effect of Medea's caldron in the renovation of his body, he will feel his mind, in a great measure, restored to its former vigour and activity.

The books we read in age will have a great influence on the temper, as well as on the conduct and the understanding. After a certain period, many of us, from motives of mistaken propriety, close our books of entertainment, and peruse nothing but those serious treatises, which, though proper at certain times, yet, when perused without variety, induce a settled melancholy, rather than a cheerful wisdom. Why should the imagination, that fertile source of all that is delightful, be left uncultivated at a time when pleasures become most deficient? Why should the works of a Horace, a Virgil, a Homer, be entirely laid aside for the gloomy meditations of a Seneca and Antoninus? The judicious mixture of books addressed to the fancy with those which enlighten the understanding, would increase the effect of both, at the same time that it would contribute to health and happiness by affording lively pleasure.

Horace wished that he might not spend his old age without his lyre. Music is, indeed, a sweet companion in every stage of life; but to the last it is peculiarly adapted. It furnishes employment without painful exertion, and, while it charms the sense, soothes the heart

to repose. After all, to religion we must recur for the best ornament of the hoary head, for the firmest support and sweetest consolation of decaying nature.

No. XL.

ON THE HAPPINESS OF DOMESTIC LIFE.

An active life is exposed to many evils which cannot reach a state of retirement; but it is found, by the uniform experience of mankind, to be, upon the whole, productive of the most happiness. All are desirous of avoiding the listlessness of an unemployed condition. With neither the incentives of ambition, of fame, of interest, nor of emulation, men eagerly rush upon hazardous and painful enterprises. There is a quick succession of ideas, a warm flow of spirits, an animated sensation, consequent on exertion, which amply compensate the fatigue of attention and the chagrin of disappointment.

One of the most useful effects of action is, that it renders repose agreeable. Perpetual rest is pain of the most intolerable kind. But a judicious interchange of rest and motion, of indolent enjoyment and strenuous efforts, gives a true relish of life; which, when too tranquil, is insipid; when too much agitated, wearisome and disgustful.

This sweet repose, which is necessary to restore the vigour by relaxing the overstrained tone of the mind, has been sought for by the wisest and greatest of men at their own fire-side. Senators and heroes have shut out the acclamations of an applauding world, to enjoy the prattling of their little ones, and to partake the endearments of the family circle. They knew that even their best friends, in the common intercourse of life, were in some degree actuated by interested motives in displaying their affection; that many of their followers applauded them in hopes of reward; and that the

giddy multitude, however zealous, were not always judicious in their approbation. But the attentions paid them at their fire-side, the smiles which exhilarated their own table, were the genuine result of undissembled love, and home was the only secure haven in the tempestuous voyage of life.

The nursery has often alleviated the fatigues of the bar and the senate-house. Nothing contributes more to raise the gently pleasing emotions, than the view of infant innocence enjoying the raptures of a game at play. All the sentiments of uncontrolled nature display themselves to the view, and furnish matter for agreeable reflection to the mind of the good-natured and philosophical observer. To partake with children in their little pleasures, is by no means unmanly. It is one of the purest sources of mirth. It has an influence in amending the heart, which necessarily takes a tincture from the company that surrounds us. Innocence, as well as guilt, is communicated and increased by the contagion of example. And the great Author of evangelical philosophy taught us to emulate the simplicity of the infantile age. He seems, indeed, himself to have been delighted with young children, and found in them, what he in vain sought among those who judged themselves their superiors,—unpolluted purity of heart.

Among the great variety of pictures which the vivid imagination of Homer has displayed throughout the Iliad, there is not one more pleasing than the family-piece which represents the parting interview between Hector and Andromache. It deeply interests the heart, while it delights the imagination. The hero ceases to be terrible, that he may become amiable. We admire him while he stands completely armed in the field of battle; but we love him more while he is taking off his helmet, that he may not frighten his little boy with its nodding plumes. We are refreshed

with the tender scene of domestic love, while all around breathes rage and discord. We are pleased to see the arm, which is shortly to deal death and destruction among a host of foes, employed in caressing an infant son with the embraces of paternal love. A professed critic would attribute the pleasing effect entirely to contrast; but the heart has declared, previously to the inquiries of criticism, that it is chiefly derived from the satisfaction which we naturally take in beholding great characters engaged in tender and amiable employments.

But, after all that is said of the purity and the solidity of domestic pleasures, they unfortunately appear, to a great part of mankind, insipid, unmanly, and capable of satisfying none but the weak, the spiritless, the inexperienced, and the effeminate. The pretenders to modern philosophy are often found to renounce the best and most natural feelings of the human heart, and, while they affect a superior liberality, to regulate their lives by the most selfish principles. Whatever appears to have little tendency to promote their own personal pleasure and advantage, they leave to be performed by those simple individuals, who are dull enough, as they say, to pursue the journey of life by the dull road of common sense. It is true they will allow, that the world must be replenished by a perpetual succession; and it is no less true, that an offspring, once introduced into the world, requires all the care of painful attention. But let the task be reserved for meaner spirits. If the passions can be gratified without the painful consequences of supporting a family, they eagerly seize the indulgence. But the toil of education, the maintenance of a progeny, they leave to those whom they deem fools enough to take a pleasure in it. There will always be a sufficient number, say they, whose folly will lead them, for the sake of a silly passion called

virtuous love, to engage in a life of perpetual anxiety. The fools' paradise, they add with derision, will never be deserted.

Presumptuous as are all such pretenders to newly-invented systems of life and conduct, it is not to be supposed they will think themselves superior to Cicero. Yet Cicero, with all his liberality of mind, felt the tenderness of conjugal and paternal attachment, and acknowledged that, at one time, he received no satisfaction in any company but that of his wife, his little daughter, and, to use his own epithet, his HONIED young Cicero. The great Sir Thomas More, whom nobody will suspect of narrowness of mind, who, by a very singular treatise, evinced that he was capable of thinking and choosing for himself, has left it on record, that he devoted a great share of his time, from the united motives of duty and delight, to the amusement of his children.

It will be objected by those who pretend to have formed their ideas of life from actual observation, that domestic happiness, however pleasing in description, like many a poetic dream, is but an alluring picture, designed by a good heart, and painted in glowing colours by a lively fancy. The constant company, they urge, even of those we love, occasions an insipidity. Insipidity grows into disgust. Disgust, long continued, sours the temper. Peevishness is the natural consequence. The domestic circle becomes the scene of dispute. Mutual antipathy is ingenious in devising mutual torment. Sullen silence or malignant remarks fill up every hour, till the arrival of a stranger causes a temporary restraint, and excites that good humour which ought to be displayed among those whom the bonds of affection and blood have already united.

Experience, indeed, proves that these remarks are

sometimes verified. But that there is much domestic misery, is no argument that there is no domestic happiness, or that the evil may not be removed.

Natural stupidity, natural ill-temper, acquired ill habits, want of education, illiberal manners, and a neglect of the common rules of discretion, will render every species of intercouse disagreeable. When those are united by connubial ties, who were separated by natural and inherent diversity, no wonder if that degree of happiness which can only result from a proper union is unknown. In the forced alliance, which the poet of Venusium mentions, of the serpent with the dove, of the tiger with the lamb, there can be no true love. When we expatiate on the happiness of the domestic group, we presuppose that all who compose it are originally assimilated by affection, and are still kept in union by discreet friendship, goodness of heart, and a sense of duty. Where this is not the case, the censure must fall on the discordant disposition of the parties, and not on the essential nature and regular tendency of family intercourse.

To form, under the direction of prudence, and by the impulse of virtuous love, an early conjugal attachment, is one of the best securities of virtue, as well as the most probable means of happiness. The duties which are powerfully called forth by the relations of husband and father, are of that tender kind which inspires goodness and humanity. He who beholds a woman whom he loves, and an helpless infant, looking up to him for support, will not easily be induced to indulge in unbecoming extravagance, or devote himself to indolence or folly. He who has a rising family to introduce into a vicious world, will be cautious of setting a bad example, the contagion of which, when it proceeds from parental authority, must be irresistibly

nalignant. Thus many who, in their individual and nconnected state, would probably have spent a life ot only useless to others, but profligate and careless i itself, have become valuable members of the com-unity, and have arrived at a degree of moral im-rovement to which they would not otherwise have :tained.

The contempt in which domestic pleasures have metimes been held, is a mark of profligacy. It is so a proof of prevailing ignorance of real enjoyment. argues a defect in taste and judgment, as well as in orals. For the general voice of the experienced has all ages declared, that the truest happiness is to be und at home.

No. XLI.

THE ILL EFFECTS OF RIDICULE, WHEN EMPLOYED AS A TEST OF TRUTH IN PRIVATE AND COMMON LIFE.

HORACE happened to say with an air of levity, that licule was more efficacious in deciding disputes of portance than all the severity of argument. Shaftes-ry caught the idea, improved upon it, and ad-nced the doctrine, that ridicule is the test of truth. those who possessed one characteristic of man in eat perfection, RISIBILITY, but who were slenderly nished with the other, RATIONALITY, adopted the nion with eagerness; for though to reason was ficult, to laugh was easy.

The admirers of the graces were glad of so pleasing nethod of philosophising, and seized on it without mination. They who admitted it were under a :essity of smiling; and to smile, if not to laugh, was owed to be graceful by the great legislator of orum.

The speculative opinions of studious men, however oneous, often afford them innocent amusement in

their closets, without diffusing any malignant influence on the manners or happiness of others. However interesting to the philosopher may be the disputes concerning liberty and necessity, or the nature of good and evil, they attract not the regard of those who are agitated in the busy walk of life by the common pursuits of interest and pleasure. The metaphysician thinks his labour of great importance to the happiness of mankind, and would be not a little mortified to find, that in the great numbers who compose the community to which he belongs, and for whose more immediate edification he consumes the midnight oil, a very small part knows that there ever existed such men as Berkeley or Hume; and that, if they knew and could understand their works, they would prefer the opportunity of earning a penny, or enjoying a good dinner, to all the advantage that ever could be derived from a conviction that matter existed not, or that the old principles of morals were erroneous.

But though this may be true of those doctrinal opinions which are too abstracted for vulgar apprehension, yet it will be found, that there are speculative notions, which, as they require no great improvement of understanding to be comprehended, are adopted as axioms as soon as proposed, and permitted to influence the conduct of life. He who is a convert to Materialism, a doctrine of late unhappily recommended by virtuous and well-meaning writers, will certainly lose some restraints which operated favourably on his morals. It is true, the writer who thus gives it all the recommendation his subtilty can supply, though he speaks the dictates of conviction, is perhaps, not apparently corrupted. But a reasonable cause may be assigned for his escaping the effect of the poison which he bears about him. He is probably a man of letters; leads a life remote from violent temptations;

has acquired habits of virtue; and, perhaps, from the practice of reasoning and disputation, can maintain or explode opinions which concern the most important interests of his fellow-creatures with all the indifference of a by-stander. But his opinions are plausibly supported: they are pleasing to the lover of novelty; they afford a fancied consolation to the vicious; and they are read by those who want a sanction for flagitious conduct, who wish to be furnished with arguments to make proselytes to vice, and who are desirous of silencing the voice of conscience by the fallacies of sophistry. They are read by the young and the gay, as a system of philosophy newly discovered, which far surpasses the antiquated doctrines of the received moralist, and as favourable to those ideas, which are eagerly embraced, on the expediency or lawfulness of unlimited indulgence.

That ridicule is an infallible criterion of truth, is an opinion, from its peculiar correspondence with the taste of the greater part of mankind, much more prevalent than Materialism, and therefore more detrimental, in the common intercourse of life, as well as in religion.

Men destitute of delicacy, and that solid merit which is usually accompanied with diffidence, often rise to the highest eminence, acquire the largest fortunes, fill the most important offices, and give law to the sentiments as well as practice of others. These, judging from themselves, have no adequate idea of the dignity of human nature, and the comparative perfection of which it is capable. They, perhaps, have been uniformly vicious, yet have had the temporal reward of virtue; they have been ignorant, yet have been admired for their wisdom; they have despised all the precepts of moral philosophy, and, by dint of that effrontery which natural want of feeling inspires, have raised themselves to fame and fortune. Bold through

the natural presumption of ignorance, and still farther elated by success, by the flattery, by the attentions which are paid to the most undeserving prosperity, they learn to laugh at all the serious part of the world, who are defrauding their genius, as it is called, in the rigid servitude of a fanciful virtue.

No wonder, then, that ridicule prevails in the lower orders; for rank, fortune, and spirit, without the least portion of learning and philosophy, are at any time able to raise a multitude of admirers, and to establish a fashion. When men, with very few other recommendations than the absence of modesty, become the leaders of a nation, a taste for RIDICULE, or, in other words, a malicious desire of levelling the exaltation of indigent virtue to the standard of worthless grandeur, will become general. This taste, which tends to vilify all that can adorn and ennoble a human creature, has been too common in every long-established and corrupted community. He must have remarked but little, who has not seen its baneful influence in our own times and country. All the cardinal virtues, if the efforts of certain gross spirits could prevail, would be laughed out of countenance, and no semblance of them be left amongst us, but the unsubstantial phantom, MODERN HONOUR.

Let us trace the progress of some ingenuous youth, emerging from an uncorrupted seminary to his station in the active world. In the retirements of study he has formed advantageous ideas of that life on which he is now to enter. His heart glows with virtuous and benevolent purposes. He has been reading of legislators, heroes, philosophers, patriots, men who shine with lustre in the page of history, and who derive all their splendour from their virtue. He longs to emulate them. He values himself little on his birth or fortune, if he has them, but owns he feels a conscious dignity

arising from his acquirements, his learning, his comprehensive views, his liberal and disinterested intentions. He loves fame, and hopes to obtain by deserving it.

Thus principled, suppose him introduced, where his fortune leads him, among men of fashion and pleasure, assembled at their usual places of resort, a cock-pit, a horse-race, a gaming-house, or a watering-place. He is struck dumb with astonishment. He finds he has hitherto dwelt on fairy ground, where all was enchantment. The fancied scene is vanished. He feels himself awkward. His accomplishments are either not understood, not valued, or have no opportunities of display. At first he is coldly neglected; and, at last, when personal acquaintance has taken place, he is considered as a novice, greatly to be pitied for his simplicity, but who may improve in time. Some kind instructor undertakes the office, and employs RIDICULE, as the most efficacious method of succeeding in it. He finds it necessary to submit to such initiation, before he can be admitted upon equal terms. He yields; though not without a sigh of regret, to think that he must divest himself of all those sentiments which he once hoped would raise him to the rank of the worthies whom he admired in books, and cannot help lamenting that he must study degeneracy. Self-abasement is an easy task. He descends from the invidious height of virtue, and is received with pleasure by his relenting companions. In his turn, he learns to despise what he once admired, and contributes, by his advice and example, to strengthen the formidable phalanx of envious laughers. He becomes a joker, a buffoon, a satirist, a mere man of the world; and perhaps is really so much degraded by contagion, as to judge these characters more valuable than that of the modest scholar, the good man, and the calm philoso-

pher. He is no longer the man of virtue, but he is the man of fashion, or high TON, as it is called, which he is taught to deem a nobler distinction.

All the useful and amiable qualities which sweeten the private and domestic circle, have occasionally been put out of countenance by the prevalence of the doctrine, that ridicule is the test of truth in common life. Conjugal attachment and fidelity, filial regard, regular industry, prudent economy, sincerity in friendship, delicate scruples, benevolence and beneficence, have been destroyed by the pretender to jocularity, who, from the malignant feelings of envy, has been prompted to bestow on them some ridiculous appellation, called a nick-name.

The effect of ridicule cannot but be powerful among the young and inexperienced. It is a remark often made, that a man is found to degenerate from the excellence which distinguished him when a boy. In the walks of literary life, instances are frequent of those who, though they were the boast of their school, appear with no superiority of merit, when they are advanced to higher seminaries, or introduced into the world. To ridicule, for the most part, they owe their degradation. Their pre-eminence excites the envy of their contemporaries, who naturally endeavour to obscure that lustre which burns them with its blaze. They at first value themselves on those talents or acquisitions, of the worth of which their companions have no adequate conception. They are received at their college with contempt. Their remarks are attended to with a sneer, and their solemnity, as a decent deportment is called, becomes the subject of perpetual laughter. A nick-name, the usual production of envy, is appropriated to them. They are shunned, as involving their companions in their own absurdity and consequent disgrace. This last is more than they can

bear. They lay aside the appearance of virtuous emulation, and the reality soon follows. They studiously unlearn all that rendered them truly valuable; and, when they have debased themselves to a certain pitch, they are received with open arms, and are united with their company by the strong assimilation of congenial natures.

Genius, virtue, learning, are often distinguished by a delicacy of mind, which wears the appearance and produces the effects of infirmity. They are easily overruled, if not convinced, by the noisy antagonist, who makes up in clamour what he wants in argument, and gains the victory by dint of leathern lungs and nerves of iron. A horse-laugh, set up by a circle of fox-hunters, would overpower the best poet or philosopher whom the world ever admired. The modest Virgil, we are told, could not stand the attacks of scoffing ridicule; and wisdom has ever sought the shade, where the impertinence of the great or the little vulgar seldom intruded. Cruel as it is to distress sensibility, and injurious to mankind to render worth contemptible, we often observe persons of character joining in the laugh against modest merit. In the moment of social enjoyment, many do not give themselves time to reflect on the consequence of their mirth; and, perhaps, with no other intention than that of promoting convivial merriment, they often hurt the feelings and interests of individuals, as well as the most important ends of civilised society.

From the desire of furnishing matter for conversation, and supporting its vivacity, some evils certainly arise, which at first view appear to proceed from malignant causes. The tale of scandal, though usually supposed to be the genuine effect of malevolence, is often produced by thoughtless levity, and an unwillingness to sit in company without supplying a share

of entertainment. The raillery which is sometimes played on with success by the shallowest, yet boldest, of the company, against persons of real merit, is not always the result of a detracting spirit, but of a fondness for coarse mirth, and an inability to let slip those opportunities for indulging it, which genius and learning, from an inattention to trifling accomplishments, are frequently thought to supply.

To be cheerful is indispensably necessary to the mutual participation of the pleasures of social intercourse. To be merry, if it is often desirable, is not always necessary. Let mirth, however, be uncontrolled while it is tempered with the wisdom not to hurt those who deserve caresses and reward; and not to sully the dignity, and wound the feelings, of unaffected virtue, by the wanton sallies of buffoonery.

Before I leave this subject, I would willingly obviate one prevailing error. Great laughers are usually called extremely good-natured. I believe they are often particularly proud and malicious; for, as they well know, there is no method of gratifying pride and malice more effectual than RIDICULE.

No. LXI.

ON THE ILL EFFECTS OF PROVING BY ARGUMENT TRUTHS ALREADY ADMITTED. [IN A LETTER.]

SIR,

I HAVE reason to think, that I inherited from nature a plain understanding, without any pretensions to the vivacity of genius. I am grateful to my parents, that it was cultivated in that common way which guides through the beaten path of life, and leads not to those eccentricities, which, for the most part, terminate in misery.

I was destined to a mercantile life, and my education was, therefore, confined to writing, arithmetic, and a

little elementary Latin picked up at the grammar-school. With my steadiness of conduct, there was no great difficulty in acquiring a competency in the trade in which I was settled by my father. As I had no family, and was free from avarice and ambition, I retired early from the smoke and hurry of the town, to a sweet little house and garden on the borders of Epping Forest.

A state of total inaction both of body and mind, I found less tolerable than the constant bustle of a town life. To my garden I had recourse for exercise. For rural sports I was unqualified, as I had never fired a gun nor mounted a horse. My garden, however, amused me sufficiently, contributed to confirm my health, and, at the same, induced a contemplative turn. This led me to seek, in books, a supply for the loss of that succession of objects, which had so long solicited and engrossed my attention in the great streets of the capital.

The particular course of reading into which I unfortunately fell might have proved hurtful, had I not been discreet enough to correct its tendency in time. At best, it only served to fill up those hours which might, indeed, have been more agreeably and more usefully employed.

I had received all the notions usually instilled by parental authority with implicit belief. I was told that there was one God, and I believed it, for I saw his works around me. I embraced revealed religion, in all its parts, with the same evidence of conviction with which I believed the sun to exist in the heavens, when I beheld its radiance, and felt its warmth. I saw and believed the difference between right and wrong, vice and virtue, justice and injustice, as strongly as the difference between black and white, and sweet and bitter. I never dreamt of calling in question the au-

thenticity of the Scriptural writers, the doctrine of the Trinity, the divinity of our Saviour, the immateriality and immortality of the human soul, and the resurrection of the body. When I repeated the Creed, I spoke with the same confidence of undoubting conviction as when I asserted the truth of a fact of which I had ocular demonstration. The steady light of common sense, together with parental authority, had hitherto guided me, and I had been humble enough to follow its directions.

It was now, at last, that I perceived the first shadow of a doubt on these subjects, and it was caused by the following circumstances. In collecting my little library, I often met with books entitled Proofs and Demonstrations of those important points, on which I entertained not a single idea of uncertainty; but I was now naturally led to conclude, that those things were not indisputably evident, of which so many laboured proofs were continually offered to the public notice. My curiosity was raised, and I began to suspect that it was owing to my simplicity alone that I had hitherto received, without proof, all those doctrines of which the rest of the world seemed to require the most powerful defence, and confirmations infinitely repeated.

The bare appearance of an attempt to prove opinions, which I had ever considered as wanting no other proof than the first strong decisions of common sense, shook the stability of my conviction. Hitherto my days had been tranquil and serene. All my principles in morality and religion had been planted in infancy, and had taken root deep and strong. My understanding had not been actively ingenious enough to overturn those systems of my forefathers which had led them through the ways of piety to peace. But I now found my happiness begin to totter, as my principles were gradually undermined.

In the books which were every day offered for the conversion of sceptics, for refuting atheists, for proving Christianity, for demonstrating that there is a difference between good and evil, for asserting that there is some essential superiority in the human nature over the animal, I found no remedy in my unsettled state, but, on the contrary, an increasing tendency to universal scepticism. The ingenious authors of such treatises find it necessary to raise objections, in order to remove them, and to give a degree of weight and solidity to the arguments of their adversaries, that the weight and solidity of their own superior and victorious arguments may be rendered more conspicuous and more honourable.

The books of the objectors I should never have read, nor should I have known any thing of their objections, had I not been ensnared into an acquaintance with the enemies of Truth by the ill-judged conduct of her friends. Heresies and errors long forgotten and exploded were revived by these defenders of the faith, merely to display their ingenuity in refutation. Sometimes, through the weakness of their judgment, they gave advantage to sophistry; and, by throwing with a feeble hand a pointless dart, encouraged a defeated foe to resume new courage.

Even by the most judicious apologies for those doctrines which I thought wanted no apology, though the arguments were, in my opinion, conclusive, I did not perceive that my conviction was strengthened, but, on the contrary, that it was in some degree less clear than before I had received argumentative demonstration. My idea of the truth was at first simple, and proportionably evident; but when that idea was connected with a long chain of arguments, my understanding could not so readily comprehend it with all its additional appendages. There is a degree of ab-

straction in profound writings which is necessarily attended with a little obscurity. And hence it happens that illustrations, as they are called, of important, almost self-evident truths, are sometimes the only circumstances which involve them in darkness.

Whatever complaints have been made against the prevalence of infidelity in this age, and however just they may be in the higher or dissipated orders, it is yet certain that the Christian religion is implicitly received by the greater part of the community. Though their practice, from the infirmity of human nature, is seldom correspondent with their principles, yet they are far from the character of speculative unbelievers. It is at least highly probable, that all who frequent the established churches are Christians. It has therefore been matter of just surprise, that a great number of the most ingenious divines should enter the pulpit as if they were to convert a congregation of heathens or deists. To prove, by a great variety of laboured arguments, the existence of God, is surely unnecessary before an audience, whose convention in a church is a proof that they already believe it. It can have little other effect than to lull them asleep, or to suggest scruples, instead of removing them. For it is certain, that few of those arguments in support of scepticism have usually fallen within the notice of the common hearer, which are for the most part adduced in the pulpit, in order to be refuted by a subtle disputant in divinity. A few good treatises might properly enough be written by the truly able, to show the sophistry of a deistical author, and then he and his lucubrations might be suffered to pass on to oblivion; whither they would glide with a rapid course, if they were not impeded by the imprudent interference of those who, if they are sincere and consistent, must earnestly wish to accelerate their extinction.

Neither polemical, controversial, or systematical divinity, seems well calculated to answer the important ends of true and practical religion. The ends of true and practical religion are all friendly and benign. But, I believe, peace, benevolence, and purity of heart are not at all promoted in those many volumes of theology, which have owed their origin to controversy, and to logical and metaphysical refinement. They too often originate in pride, and terminate in acrimony.

One might, indeed, almost venture to pronounce it a judgment on the temerity and the presumption of man, that scarcely any philosopher has distinguished himself by those abstruse speculations, which were never designed to fall within the sphere of the human intellect, without starting some notion absurd enough to render his memory ridiculous. Berkeley, one of the authors on whom I was so unfortunate as to fall, and whose sense and virtue I sincerely venerate, appeared to me an object of ridicule, however ingeniously he had demonstrated to me the non-existence of matter. I happened to meet with him soon after I had been reading an author who had proved, so far, at least, as that my poor understanding could not refute him, that the human soul was material, and perished at death. Between them both, I found I was, on a sudden, deprived of both my soul and body, without any sensible loss or detriment in either.

Convinced, at last, that common sense, or that share and species of understanding which Nature has bestowed on the greater part of men, is, when competently improved by education, and assisted by divine grace, the safest guide to certainty and happiness, I have laid aside proofs, demonstrations, and illustrations of all matters sufficiently proved, demonstrated, and illustrated to the humble mind, by their own internal evidence. And, however the learned and the dispu-

tatious may amuse themselves in morals and religion with fine-spun subtilties, I shall rest satisfied with the coarser notions of my forefathers, and make the Scriptural rule the rule of my thoughts and actions—To do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with my God.

No. XLIII.

ON THE NECESSITY OF TEMPERANCE TO THE HEALTH OF THE MIND.

THE advantages which arise from regulating the several appetites to the health of the body, have been too repeatedly insisted upon to require any farther animadversion. The present remarks shall be confined to temperance in diet, and to the advantages which accrue from it to the health of the mind.

How far the intellectual faculties are connected with the animal economy, is a disquisition which rather belongs to the natural philosopher than to the moralist. The experience of every individual must convince him of their alliance, so far as that the mind and body sympathize in all the modifications of pleasure or of pain.

One would imagine, that the Stoical apathy was founded on a notion of the independence of the mind on the body. According to this philosophy, the mind may remain, as it were, an unconcerned spectator, while the body undergoes the most excruciating torments: but the moderns, however disposed to be Stoics, cannot help being a little afflicted by a fit of the gout or stone.

If the mind suffers with the body in the violence of pain and acuteness of disease, it is usually found to recover its wonted strength when the body is restored to health and vigour.

But there is one kind of sympathy, in which the

mind continues to suffer even after the body is relieved. When the listless langour, and the nauseous satiety of recent excess is gradually worn off, the mind still continues for a while to feel a burden which no efforts can remove, and to be surrounded with a cloud which time only can dissipate.

Didactic authors, who have undertaken to prescribe rules for the student in his pursuit of knowledge, frequently insist on a regularity and abstinence in the articles of food and wine. It is, indeed, a fruitless labour to aim at increasing the stock of ideas, and improving the intellectual powers, without a strict observance of the laws of Temperance and Frugality.

It has been remarked, that the founders of colleges who spared no expense in the embellishment of the buildings, were not so liberal in providing the indulgencies of the table. Perhaps those no less judicious than pious patrons of learning, were sensible of the utility of frequent fasting and temperate meals, in promoting literary as well as moral and religious improvement. Nature's wants they took care to satisfy; and Nature, uncorrupted, wants but little.

Horace, in a satire in which he professedly enumerates the advantages of Temperance, observes, with a beautiful energy of expression, "that the body overcharged with the excess of yesterday, weighs down the mind together with itself, and fixes to the earth that particle of the divine spirit."

That Aurora is a friend to the Muses, is almost proverbial, and, like all those aphorisms which are founded on experience, is a just remark; but, if an adequate cause were to be assigned for this effect, I know not whether it might not justly be attributed as much to fasting as to the refreshment of sleep. The emptiness of the stomach it is which tends to give to the understanding acuteness, to the imagination vigour, and to

the memory retention. But temperance must not be suffered to become unhealthy abstemiousness; for inanition is no less injurious to the mind and body than repletion.

It is well known, that the principal meal of the ancients was the supper; and it has been matter of surprise that they, whose wisdom was so generally conspicuous in the several institutions of common life, should adopt a practice which is now universally esteemed injurious to health. It is, however, not unreasonable to suppose, that they were unwilling, to clog their intellects by satisfying the cravings of hunger in the day-time, the season of business and deliberation, and chose rather to indulge themselves in the hour of natural festivity, when no care remained but to retire from the banquet to the pillow.

No. XLIV.

ON CONCISENESS OF STYLE IN WRITING AND CONVERSATION.

A CELEBRATED French writer, remarkable for CONCISENESS OF STYLE, apologizes for the prolixity of a letter to a friend, which he had made rather longer than usual, by saying, that he had not time to write a shorter.

To say much in a few words, is certainly a great excellence, and at the same time a great difficulty in composition. The mind naturally dwells on a strong conception, views it on every side, and expresses its variety of lights in as great a variety of words; but the amplification of a sentence, though it may add to its perspicuity, diminishes its force; as the scattered sun-beams diffuse only a gentle heat, but are able to burn when collected in a focus.

Brevity of expression is sometimes the mark of conscious dignity and virtue. It was manliness of senti-

ment and haughtiness of soul which gave rise to the Laconic style. When the tyrant of Macedon menaced the Lacedæmonians, the answer they returned was comprised in these few words: "Dionysius is at Corinth." To understand which, it is necessary to call to mind, that Dionysius, tyrant of Sicily, had been dethroned by his people, and compelled to earn his bread by setting up a little school at Corinth. Such a document, expressed in so brief a manner, must have struck the mind with more force than the laboured periods of an Isocrates, or the tiresome diffusion of a Cicero in his Asiatic style.

It is well known that Sallust was an enemy to the great orator of Rome. One would almost imagine, from the difference of their style, that the disagreement extended to matters of taste and literature. Sallust always labours to express his ideas in the fewest words. Cicero delights in amplification. It has been said, however, that a man of true taste would rather have written that beautiful parallel between Cato and Cæsar than all the Philippics. I differ from them; as I think Cicero one of the best writers whom the world has yet seen, notwithstanding a few deviations from Attic simplicity.

Many critics have employed their talents in making comparisons between Demosthenes and Tully. All of them agree in attributing to the former conciseness, and to the latter diffusiveness; and, according to this judgment, they have not hesitated to give the preference to the Athenian. The concise vehemence of Demosthenes, say they, carried all before it by violence; the prolixity of Cicero gained ground by the soft arts of insinuation. The effect of the former was sudden and irresistible; that of the latter, comparatively weak and dilatory. But Cicero was not only an orator.

In the *denouement* of a modern tragedy, we find the

for his own sagacity to discover. The mind greedily snatches at a hint, and delights to enlarge upon it; but frigid is the employment of attending to those productions, the authors of which have laboured every thing with such tautology, that the observer is wearied by unnecessary explanation. Things may be too obvious to excite attention. The sun, the moon, and the stars, roll over our heads every day without attracting our notice; but we survey with eager curiosity a comet, an eclipse, or any other extraordinary phenomenon in nature.

No. XLV.

ON THE CHARACTER AND STYLE OF PLINY THE YOUNGER.

THE character of PLINY the younger, in whatever light it is viewed, is pleasing. The elegance of his writings resulted from the habitual elegance of his mind and manners. Considered as a man of letters, and a man of the world, he may be said, more than any of the ancients, to deserve the epithet of *All-accomplished.*

It has, indeed, been objected, that his letters are too elaborate. Ease, the characteristic of the epistolary style, is said to be sacrificed to studied ornament: but it should be remembered by the censurers of Pliny, that there are beauties of art as well as of nature; and that art even when misplaced, as it usually is in familiar letters, may produce an agreeable work, as nature may bring forth something anomalous, which, though termed a monster by the naturalists, may yet be beautiful. The perusal of Pliny's letters excites a pleasure more similar to that which arises from a view of an elegant parterre, the formal gardening of the old school, than to that which is derived from contemplating the ruder beauties of uncultivated nature, or the ornamented landscape.

Pliny is among those few ancient authors, who have

been translated into English without losing much of their orginal grace. Lord Orrery and Mr. Melmoth seem to have resembled him in their manners, as well as in their style. The task was natural to them; for, while they expressed their author's idea, they appear to have expressed their own. Both the translations have uncommon merit; and, if a preference be given to Melmoth's, it must, at the same time, be acknowledged, that a very great share of praise is due to that of Lord Orrery.

The panegyric of Trajan has, like the epistles, been censured as stiff, laboured, and affected; but if the beauties of the composition can excuse the appearance of labour in the epistles, with much greater reason ought they to justify it in a formal oration. At an advanced period of literature, when taste becomes too capricious and depraved to endure the graces of nature and simplicity, there is no resource left for an author who would acquire popularity, but to labour in the invention of ingenious thoughts and new conceits, and in bestowing on his productions the nicest polish of art. Panegyrical pieces of eloquence are commonly of all others the most difficult, because their subjects are of all others the most barren. What may be said in very high praise of any man, may usually be comprehended in few words, if truth only and unembellished facts are plainly represented. Whenever, therefore, it is required, by the ceremonies of a public solemnity, to expatiate on the virtues of particular persons, and those persons not the must meritorious, the orator soon finds himself under a necessity of supplying the deficiency of matter by ingenious turns and laboured ornaments.

The compositions of Pliny, whether epistolary or oratorical, are not likely to please the common or superficial reader. Sounding periods, and animated

expressions, are required by the vulgar, rather than the less obvious beauties of correctness, refinement, or delicacy. The passions and the imagination of those whose intellects and judgement are weak, are often strong and lively. Their mental appetite, like their corporeal, unaccustomed to niceties, learns to prefer coarse viands to the dainties of luxury. An uncultivated mind perhaps feels, from the rude ballad of an itinerant singer, as much pleasure as that which arises to an improved taste from the polished pieces of an Horace or a Pindar. It is, therefore, no derogation from the merits of Pliny, that he is not universally admired. His elegance is too subtle and refined for the vulgar eye.

Though great genius may be displayed in hewing even a rough statue, or in sketching an imperfect picture, yet the judicious connoisseur will always feel a pleasure in examining those works of sculpture or painting which have received the highest polish, and have been finished with the nicest traits of the pencil. Such writers as Homer and Shakespeare I must admire with all their imperfections on their heads; but yet, as imperfections are not of themselves laudable, it is surely consistent with reason to admire those also, who, like Pliny, are even painfully solicitous to avoid them. Longinus, with all the ardour of genius, prefers faulty eminence to faultless mediocrity; but neither he, nor any other sensible critic, has pronounced correctness a fault.

It is possible that the judgment may approve, while the heart and imagination remain unaffected. But we read to be moved, to be entertained, to be delighted. Mere approbation is a frigid sentiment, An animated work, therefore, which excites warm emotions, attended with occasional disgust, is read in preference to another, which is insipid though

correct, and dull though judicious. But where genius is united with correct taste, the judgment, the heart, and the imagination, are at once fully satisfied. Such a combination existed in the minds of Pliny and Addison. It must, indeed, be remarked, to the honour of Addison, that he is far more natural than Pliny. He has all the elegance of the polite Roman, without the affectation.

"The elegance of Pliny's manners," says Melmoth, "adds force to the most interesting, at the same time that it enlivens the commonest, subjects. But the polite and spirited turn of his epistles is, by no means, their principal recommendation: they receive a much higher value as they exhibit one of the most amiable and animating characters in all antiquity. Pliny's whole life seems to have been employed in the exercise of every generous and social affection." Who then, I ask, will not forgive the blemishes of his writings, especially as the blemishes are blended with so much beauty?

No. XLVI.

ON THE EXPEDIENCY OF EMBELLISHING COMPOSITION WITH HARMONIOUS PERIODS, AND WITH OTHER JUDICIOUS ORNAMENTS.

THE laborious antiquary, and the dull compiler, are commonly contented with a book, however unadorned and uninteresting, if it afford information. The flowers of rhetoric they despise, as meretricious artifices; and the graces of style they neglect, as contributing more to embellishment than to solidity.

But the majority of readers are neither able nor desirous to overcome that propensity to be pleased which they derive from nature. Besides an understanding to conceive, an imagination to invent, and a memory to retain, they have an ear finely suscep-

tible of all the music of modulated periods. Compositions not addressed to the latter as well as the former of these faculties, they may reject as defective. The finest reasoning, and the most animated oratory, are attended to with disgust, when accompanied with discord. Intrinsic merit may excite approbation; but external ornament is necessary to give pleasure. An accurate system, or a well-authenticated history, however rugged the style, is valuable, as a collection of materials; but cannot claim the title of a perfect composition, till it is polished to such a degree of smoothness or brilliancy as the species of writing admits or seems to require.

In the rude ages of literature, the mind acquiesces in solid sense, expressed in unharmonious diction. An Ennius among the Romans, and a Shakespeare among the moderns, are admired for justness and sublimity of conception, though the style be often rough and discordant. The novelty of the first literary productions causes so strong a pleasure in the reader's mind, that he can perceive nothing wanting to complete his satisfaction. His ear is unaccustomed to tuneful measures, and, for want of better examples, feels a pleasure arising from the harshest numbers. Thus the vulgar listen with delight to the rude notes of a ballad-singer; while the refined ear of a connoisseur in music cannot be soothed but with the soft warbling of an Italian.

But succeeding writers find it necessary, if they hope for readers, to adopt graces unknown to their predecessors. They find it difficult to add novelty to the matter; because, in the course of a few ages, every subject is frequently treated, and consequently soon exhausted. Systematical writings must often, from their very nature, contain nearly the same thoughts, connected in a similar manner. In all

kinds of composition, which, either from their particular nature, or from their having been before discussed, admit of little additional invention, if novelty is necessary, it may be exhibited in the style, though not in the matter. An author who cannot add any thing new to the philosophy of a Bacon or a Newton, may yet deliver their thoughts in such a manner, and refine their beauties with such ornaments of diction, that his work may be more read than those of the inventors. Fontenelle and Le Pluche have been universally studied, while the sources from which they drew, the works of Bacon and Boyle, are often left a prey to moths and worms in some deserted library.

The books which have united delight with instruction have always survived those which had no other aim than real utility. Dulness only can pore over the uninteresting page, where nothing is offered to soothe the ear and flatter the imagination. Such study resembles a journey over the gloomy deserts, where no sun-beam cheers the way, no hospitable door invites, no enchanting prospect alleviates the pain of fatigue. Necessity alone can urge the traveller over barren tracks and snow-topt mountains; but he treads with rapture along the fertile vales of those happier climes, where every breeze is perfume, and every scene a picture. Hence in the repositories of literature, we observe, that bulky tomes, replete with the profoundest erudition, are left untouched on dusty shelves; while the more superficial, yet more pleasing productions, are perused with delight, and committed to memory by repetition. It is, indeed, a melancholy reflection, that those immense works of learning, which cost the labour of long lives, which were produced by many an aching head and palpitating heart, and which by their authors hoped to acquire immortality, are at last consigned to oblivion,

because external beauty is not united with intrinsic value.

Every species of composition has some end in view, which if it does not accomplish, it falls short of due perfection. The end of all historical, rhetorical, and poetical works, is to please as well as to instruct. If either of these does not comprehend every mode of pleasing which is consistent with its kind, it is faulty. Upon this plea, the advocates for rhyme in English verse rest their argument. Rhyme, say they, judiciously conducted, gives an additional power of pleasing to the natural inherent charms of poetry. It is not to be rejected as a Gothic ornament, invented by monkish barbarism, and continued by a bigoted adherence to custom; but it is to be adopted and admired as an improvement even on classic versification. In the hands of a Dryden or a Pope, it soothes the ear with a melody hardly excelled by a Virgil; and though no judicious critic can join Voltaire in censuring Shakespeare for not adopting rhyme (because rhyme is absurd in conversation, whether dramatic or convivial), yet every one must allow that the poems of Pope would lose much of their beauty should they be deprived of rhyme, even though the subject matter were not to undergo the least variation. We should indeed find in him, as Horace says on another occasion, the scattered limbs of a dismembered poet, but we should infallibly lose all those graces which result from harmony. The bare matter, however just the thoughts and forcible the reasoning, would not give the author the reputation of a great poet. The same remarks may be transferred to prosaic composition. We shall seldom listen to any works in polite literature, unless the ear is charmed while the mind is convinced.

One may compare writing to building. It is not enough to bring the stone from the quarry, and form it into a regular pile, in the rude state in which it was produced by nature. It may, indeed, however rough and unshapen, afford a shelter in necessity, and serve all the purposes of a common use; but will not strike the eye of a passenger with wonder, till the chisel in the master's hand shall have called forth each latent beauty of the marble, added to the columns the Corinthian foliage, and united grace with strength.

To prove how naturally we are attached to modulated composition, we may remark, that the first works of the most celebrated writers were poetical. The faculty of imagination is the earliest that displays itself in the human mind. The ardour of youth, too wild to be restrained by frigid rules, loves to indulge in all the license of poetry; but as the reasoning powers ripen, they are enabled to control the sallies of fancy, which, perhaps, of itself gradually grows chaster and more correct. At this advanced period, the mind descends from the heights of poetry to prose. But it insensibly and unavoidably communicates some of the graces of the art which it has relinquished to that which it assumes. A vein of poetical ore will be discerned not only in the thought, but in the style; which, though it will not fall into the fault of real metre, will necessarily flow in such cadence as a poetical ear shall dictate and approve.

Unlearned readers seldom attend to the beauties of harmonious composition. If they are pleased with it, they scarce know whence their pleasure arises. Attentive to the matter rather than the manner, they would, perhaps, think an author but ill-employed who should compose a treatise on the art of turning a period. They would be surprised to be informed, that one of the ancient critics has acquired a great reputation by

writing on an art which is conversant in sound rather than in sense, and which is, therefore, in their opinion, unimportant. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, however, owes more of his reputation to his Treatise on the Structure of Words, than to any other of his works.

Nor has the art been confined to speculative critics; for Cicero, a practical rhetorician, has attributed an efficacy to the harmony of periods, which experience only can prove to be real. A sentence of no more than five words, he informs us, was received with universal plaudits, though, as the author of it confessed, their whole merit consisted in the skilful collocation. Transpose but a single word, and the effect will be entirely lost. In his elegant Dialogues on the Character of an Orator, he has entered into a curious disquisition on the subject of prosaic numbers, and seems to require in an oration an exactness of metre almost equal to that of verse. The subject is certainly curious, and this great rhetorician, as well as orator, has treated it with precision; but as the quantity of Latin words is ascertained by rules very different from the analogy of modern languages, the strictures of Cicero have no otherwise contributed to harmonize the periods of our writers, than by suggesting the beauty and expediency of prosaic modulation.

But if his precepts have not much influence in giving this finishing grace to compositions in our own language, his example may communicate to them the most captivating melody. His cadences are almost as pleasing to a susceptible ear as a regular piece of music. So necessary did he deem it to satisfy the sense of hearing, that he often adds a synonymous and unnecessary word to complete the roundness of his period. To accuse an author of Cicero's fame, of using words merely for the sound, may, perhaps, surprise him who is not conversant in his writings; but the recollection

of a few passages will immediately induce those who are well acquainted with his works to acknowledge that this observation is founded in justice.

But whoever would trace this harmony to its origin, must be referred to the Greek writers. Their numerous expletives, which occur in every page, are used almost solely to fill up chasms in the cadence, and to render the harmony full and perfect. Some critics have, indeed, attempted to point out the signification of every particle in every passsage; but their ill success, after all their diligence, tends to confirm the opinion just now advanced.

The periods of Plato are the models of Cicero. A good ear, on a cursory comparison of a few sentences, cannot but observe how well the Roman orator has imitated the Greek philosopher.

It may be reasonably conjectured, that one cause why those ancient writers, who have come down to us entire, survived their contemporaries, may be, that they extended their attention beyond copiousness and solidity to pleasing sound and modulated cadence.

No. XLVII.

ON THE PREVAILING TASTE FOR THE OLD ENGLISH POETS.

THE antiquarian spirit, which was once confined to inquiries concerning the manners, the buildings, the records, and the coins of the ages that preceded us, has now extended itself to those poetical compositions which were popular among our forefathers, but which have gradually sunk into oblivion through the decay of language, and the prevalence of a correct and polished taste. Books printed in the black letter are sought for by the English antiquary with the same avidity with which he peruses a monumental inscription, or treasures up a Saxon piece of money. The

popular ballad composed by some illiterate minstrel, and which has been handed down by tradition for several centuries, is rescued from the hands of the vulgar, to obtain a place in the collection of a man of taste. Verses which, a few years past, were thought worthy the attention of children only, or of the lowest and rudest orders, are now admired for that artless simplicity which once obtained the name of coarseness and vulgarity.

It must be confessed, that this species of antiquarianism is better calculated for the public in general than any other. An old rusty coin or shield would excite rapture in a Swinton, or a Rawlinson, but would be beheld with perfect indifference by the greater part of the literati, and by all the unlearned. But the genuine beauties of poetry are capable of being relished by those who are perfectly regardless whether or not it was printed in the black letter, and written by Rowley or by Chatterton. Every lover of poetry is pleased with the judicious selection of Percy, though he gives himself little concern about dates. The antiquary may, perhaps, admire the oldest and the worst piece in the collection, only because it is old. It is certain, however, that the common reader partakes with the antiquarian in the pleasure resulting from labour bestowed in researches after poetry, though he has no adequate idea of the supreme felicity of finding an Otho, or of possessing a trivial old song.

The mere antiquarian taste in poetry, or the admiration of bad poetry, solely because it is ancient, is certainly absurd. It is more difficult to discover the meaning of many of our old poets, disguised as it is in an obselete and uncouth phraseology, than to read an elegant Greek or Latin author; and when the meaning is found, it is often poor and contemptible. Such study is, indeed, not unfrequenly like raking in a

dunghill for pearls, and gaining the labour only for one's pains.

Our earlier poets, many of those whose names and works are deservedly forgotten, seem to have thought that rhyme was poetry. And even this constituent requisite they applied with extreme negligence. It was, however, good enough for its readers, most of whom considered the mere ability of reading as a very high attainment. It has had its day, and the antiquary must not despise us, if we cannot peruse it with patience. He who delights in all such reading as is never read, may derive some pleasure from the singularity of his taste; but he ought still to respect the judgment of mankind, which has consigned to oblivion the works which he admires. While he pores unmolested on Gower, Chaucer, Lydgate, and Occleve, let him not censure our obstinacy in adhering to Homer, Virgil, Milton, and Pope.

In perusing the antiquated pages of our English bards, we sometimes find a passage which has comparative merit, and which shines with the greater lustre, because it is surrounded with deformity.—While we consider the rude state of literature, the want of models, the depraved taste of readers, we are struck with the least appearance of beauty. We are flattered with an idea of our own penetration, in discovering excellencies which have escaped the notice of the world. We take up the volume with a previous determination to prove that it contains valuable matter. We are unwilling that our pains should be unrewarded. We select a few lines from a long work, and, by a little critical refinement, prove that they are wonderfully excellent. But the candid are ready to confess, that they have not often dicovered in this department a sufficient degree or quantity of absolute merit to repay the labour of a profound and laborious research.

Rowe has said, that the old English bards and minstrels soared many a height above their followers; and it is true, that those old ballads, which are in the mouths of peasants on both sides the Tweed, have something in them irresistibly captivating. Vulgar, coarse, inelegant, they yet touch the heart. Many of them, when read as the writers intended, are musical. They have pleased the ear and the mind of a whole people, and therefore, in spite of the cold feelings of the critic, must be pronounced beautiful. Addison first gained them the notice of scholars by his praises of Chevy Chase. He illustrated their beauties by comparing them with the Classics. This, indeed, drew the attention of the classical reader; but it may be questioned, whether it would not be a better method to view them as originals, and, in order to procure them a general reception, appeal to the genuine feelings of nature. For, in truth, when compared, as compositions, with the correct works of Virgil or Horace, the barbarous language in which they are written makes them appear to disadvantage. At the same time it must be confessed, that it affords a very pleasing employment to the polite scholar to remark the coincindences of thought which are usually found in works of genius, written at different periods by those who could not possibly imitate each other. The philosopher gladly seizes the phenomenon, as it tends to elucidate a curious truth respecting the human mind, that all men of nearly equal faculties fall into nearly the same train of thought, and feel nearly the same sentiments, when placed in similar circumstances.

Notwitstanding the incontrovertible merit of many of our relicks of ancient poetry, I believe it may be doubted, whether any one of them would be tolerated as the production of a modern. As a good imitation

of the ancient manner, it would find its admirers; but, considered independently, as an original, it would be thought a careless, vulgar, inartificial composition! There are few who do not read Dr. Percy's own piece, and those of other late writers, with more pleasure than the oldest ballad in the collection of that ingenious writer.

Poetical genius appeared with great lustre among the Scots, at a time when it was obscured in England. At one of the barrenest periods of English literature, Dunbar, Douglas, and Lyndsay, wrote with great elegance, as far as the language would admit, and in the true spirit of original poetry. They wanted only a better language, and a more durable dialect, to have become national classics. With all their beauties, it is difficult to read them with patience; for the necessity of continually recurring to a glossary cools the ardour which the perusal of a beautiful passage may have excited, and induces the tired reader to fly to more modern books, whose gold, equally pure, may be extracted without the trouble of a long, tedious, analytical process.

The present age, it must be owned with regret, is an age of literary deception. It is, indeed, characteristical of an advanced period of letters and refinement, when the various modes of writing have, in every department, been anticipated, to have recourse to forgery in order to gain attention. Of this, every one acquainted with the present state of literature in England is sensible. Chatterton, though the best, is not the only imitator and pretended restorer of our ancient poets. There are many coiners and forgers in the community of literature.

It will be allowed by all, that a composition ought to be estimated by its absolute, not its relative, merit. And yet a poem, which, while it is supposed to have been written three or four centuries ago, is generally

read and admired, is neglected as soon as it is discovered to be a modern production. This seems to have been the case with the reputed poems of Rowley. That a work should lose its value in the eyes of the antiquary when it is found to wear only a counterfeited rust, is not wonderful; but it might reasonably be supposed, that a man of taste would continue to admire it even after the detection; though at the same time it is true, that most men have so much of the antiquarian spirit, as to feel an additional pleasure when excellence is united with antiquity. By an effort of imagination, we place ourselves in the age of the author, and call up a thousand collateral ideas, which give beauties to his work not naturally inherent.

Whether the antiquarian taste in poetry is reasonable or unreasonable, it affords an elegant and a pleasing amusement to those who possess it. Mistakes in matters of mere taste and literature are harmless in their consequences to society. They have no direct tendency to hurt any interest, or corrupt any morals. While, therefore, they are not likely to become general, they must not be attacked with virulence. Disputes in the republic of letters, a republic unlike the political commonwealth, should be conducted with gentleness. That humanity of temper, which a successful pursuit of learning inspires, would, of itself, it might be supposed, secure a mild and generous behaviour in literary controversy: but the reverse has usually been the case. Bentley, Middleton, Warburton, have sometimes indulged an irritable temper beyond those limits which, as Christians and scholars, they must have seen and approved. They who have observed the rancour mutually displayed in the disagreements of the learned, must have concluded, if they knew not the state of the question, that something of the utmost consequence to life, fame, or fortune, was at stake. Contempt or indignation

must have taken place, when they found that nothing more was agitated than the propriety or impropriety of Greek accents, the genuineness of some foolish book, the justness of a conjectural emendation, and other subjects which had not the least tendency to serve or injure either science or society.

No. XLVIII.

ON THE MORAL EFFECTS OF PAINTING AND PRINTS.

EVERY thing which is capable of affecting the mind in a forcible manner may be rendered subservient to the purposes of morality. Music, and, indeed, all the sister arts, are known to possess a power of exciting sentiments of various kinds; of rousing the mind to manly virtue, or relaxing it to vice and effeminacy. But perhaps none are more instantaneous or subtle in their operation than the productions of the art of painting. Every one can see, is able to collect the meaning of an obvious picture, and the transition from the eyes to the heart is short and rapid. To receive an impression from a book, it is necessary to read and reflect; but the idea suggested by a painting is caught at a glance.

A liberal, philosophical, and Christian statesman, whose comprehensive mind attends to the morals no less than the finances of a nation, will consider the public exhibition of pictures as a matter of national concern. He will use his influence to cause such figures to be presented to the public as have a natural tendency to call forth manly sentiments, to diffuse a love of decency and order, a spirit of benevolence, honour, honesty, and patriotic virtue. Divines and philosophers, heroes and statesmen, useful writers, and good men of all denominations, represented with all the charms of the pencil, and with all the natural expressions of their countenances, cannot fail to ani-

mate the bosom with a love of excellence. And it is one peculiar advantage, that this effect may be produced on the rude and the vulgar, on those who have never been improved by education, and who are neither able nor inclined to improve themselves by reading and reflection.

The encouragement of the arts is, indeed, attended with a considerable expense; but while they are made by due direction to improve the minds of the people, they amply repay it. When they are so perverted as to produce unmanly sentiments, or vicious and idle habits, they are, at once, the bane of private life, and of a free constitution.

The world never saw the equal of our countryman, Hogarth, in the art of moral painting. The scenes, indeed, which he has exhibited are taken, for the most part, though not always, from low life; but in this respect the painter showed his judgment: not only because low life affords a greater abundance and variety of humour, but because low life stands most in need of instruction, and can receive it more easily from a picture than from oral or written documents. I very much doubt, whether the sermons of Tillotson ever dissuaded so instantaneously from lust, cruelty, and intemperance, as the prints of Hogarth.

The painters of the Dutch or Flemish school do, indeed, represent low life; but the representations are rather amusing than instructive. Indeed, I am not sure that they are not injurious; for, while they exhibit man in some of the lowest and most humiliating forms, they tend to increase his real degradation. It is much to be lamented, that the great skill which they evidently display in the art of painting was not employed in subjects more susceptible of elevation.

Humorous pictures or prints are, however, too entertaining to be rejected, while they are restrained within

the limits of decency and good-nature. The taste for them is, in this age and country, very prevalent; but I am sorry to say, that the limits which have just been mentioned have been too little observed. Among the various methods invented for the gratification of private and party malice, few have been more successful than the caricatura. There is no personage however exalted, no character however respectable, which may not be lowered in the estimation of the vulgar by a ludicrous picture. Some action, passion, feature, attitude, or dress, may be applied to the most deserving man, and may render him an object of ridicule. A sad perversion of a noble art! but which, it is to be feared, will continue while the public is led by its taste for detraction to reward the artist by the purchase of his works, however malignant and defamatory.

Humorous prints have been of late very successfully used to ridicule some of those extravagancies of dress and manners which arise from effeminacy, and tend to increase it. The figures represented have raised a very natural and innocent laugh, and the satire, though well pointed and directed, has not always been personal. Nothing can be more laudable than to exert this very efficacious art in rendering folly, vanity, and vice, objects of popular derision.

But it must be confessed, that it is much oftener employed in corrupting the heart and imagination by indecent figures. And here I cannot help making a complaint against the police of the metropolis, which allows some of the shops in the most crowded streets to exhibit in their windows such prints as cannot fail to inflame the passions of inexperienced youth. Why slumbers the magistrate, or to what purpose are the laws and wise regulations of a civilised state, if we cannot permit our children to walk through the public streets of the capital without danger of corrupting

their morals, merely by their looking at a window which is so furnished as to attract the attention of the most innocent and unsuspicious? A great and successive crowd is usually assembled before the print-shops, which while it annoys the honest passenger who is hastening to transact important business, is perpetually drinking a poisonous draught, of which who can tell how destructive and diffusive may be the consequences? Indeed, the print-shops, which display to thousands in the course of every day the most inflammatory prints, may justly be stigmatized as the guides to the brothel. In ancient times, and in heathen times, we read of the utmost precaution taken to preserve the modesty of young men; and ought not the rulers of the greatest city in the Christian world to blush, while they connive at a practice which tends, perhaps, more than any thing else, to debauch the minds of apprentices, clerks, and, indeed, of all the rising generation? It is certainly a nuisance, and may legally be removed. The interest of some unconscientious individual might perhaps be injured by lessening the sale of his corrupting representations; but what is the interest of an individual, when placed in competition with the morals of the multitude? If the print-shops in a great city were to exhibit only virtuous prints, they might be highly serviceable to the cause of morality.

The serious part of mankind have complained, that some of the catchpenny periodical publications have of late been embellished, as it is called, with such prints as tend immediately to corrupt private life, and most essentially to injure society. Neither have they appeared clandestinely, but have boldly solicited notice by a description of their contents in the public advertisements. The serious part of mankind have, I say, complained, and have asked each other, whether the official guardians of religion and decency have been so

immersed in politics, or so engaged in pursuit of preferment, as not to have noticed publications which they ought, if they possessed sufficient influence, to have suppressed? They who have sons and daughters cannot but apprehend danger, when the most licentious pictures are daily obtruded on the public eye; and they cannot help thinking, at the same time, that the preservation of the children of the commonwealth deserves at least as much attention from the legislature as the preservation of hares, partridges, and puppies.

The art of painting is one of those innocent and delightful means of pleasure which Providence has kindly afforded to brighten the prospects of human life. Under due restrictions, and with proper direction, it may be rendered something more than an elegant mode of pleasing the eye and the imagination; it may become a very powerful auxiliary to virtue.

[It is but just to add, that soon after this paper was printed, the magistrates of London issued orders for the prosecution of such print-sellers as should exhibit licentious prints in their windows. Attempts have also been made to restrain licentious publications; but they have often proved abortive: and it has been argued, perhaps with too much reason, that a public endeavour to impede may serve only to promote their circulation by increasing their notoriety.]

No. XLIX.

ON THE IMPROPRIETY OF PUBLICLY ADOPTING A NEW TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE.

THE translations of our Bible, it is allowed, had great merit; but, as nothing is begun and perfected at the same time, it is not surprising that the translation is not exempt from the characteristic of all human undertakings. Critics, assisted by the labours of the translators, have prosecuted their inquiries into the

them, will not, upon the whole, receive so deep and lasting an impression, as from the old one with all its imperfections. And from the general effect of works like these, their excellence and utility must be estimated.

The poetical passages of Scripture are peculiarly pleasing in the present translation. The language, though it is simple and natural, is rich and expressive. Solomon's Song, difficult as it is to be interpreted, may be read with delight, even if we attend to little else but the brilliancy of the diction; and it is a circumstance which increases its grace, that it appears to be quite unstudied. The Psalms, as well as the whole Bible, are literally translated, and yet the translation abounds with passages exquisitely beautiful. Even where the sense is not very clear, nor the connexion of ideas obvious at first sight, the mind is soothed, and the ear ravished, with the powerful yet unaffected charms of the style. It is not, indeed, necessary to enlarge on the excellencies of the translation in general; for its beauties are such as are to be recognised by feeling more than by description; and it must be owned, that they have been powerfully felt by the majority of the nation ever since the first edition. In many a cottage and farm-house, where the Bible and Prayer-book constitute the library, the sweet songs of Israel, and the entertaining histories of Joseph and his brethren, Saul and Jonathan, constitute a never-failing source of heartfelt pleasure.

It is false refinement, vain philosophy, and an immoderate love of dissipation, which cause so little attention to be paid to this venerable book in the busy and gay world. If we do not disclaim all belief in its contents, it is surely a great omission in many persons who wish to be completely accomplished, or think themselves so already, to be utterly unacquainted with the

sacred volume. It is our duty to inspect it; and it is graciously so ordered, that our duty in this instance may be a pleasure; for the Bible is truly pleasing, considered only as a collection of very ancient and curious history and poetry.

With respect to the impropriety of appointing a new translation to be read in churches, what I have advanced on the subject is only matter of opinion, and may perhaps be found in the event erroneous. I shall, however, very confidently say, that innovations of this kind are of the highest importance, and may probably be attended with the most violent convulsions. They ought, therefore, to be attempted only when there is an absolute necessity for them, and after the maturest deliberation.

No. L.

ON THE MULTIPLICATION OF BOOKS.

No amusements are more easily attainable, and attended with more solid satisfaction and fewer inconveniences, than the amusements of literature. In these late ages, there is scarcely a subject which can reasonably excite human curiosity, on which satisfactory information may not be acquired by the perusal of books; and books too, from their multitude, and cheapness, obvious to all who are disposed to give them their attention. Poetry, history, eloquence, and philosophy in all its ramifications, are constantly at hand, and ready to gratify the mental appetite with every elegant variety of intellectual sustenance. The imagination can at all times call up, by the medium of books, the most vivid representations of every object which the physical and moral world have been known in any age or country to produce. Exempt from the inconveniences of foreign travel, from the dangers of a military life, from the narrow escapes of the voyager,

from the tumult of political engagements, the student can enjoy, in the comfortable retreat of his library, all that has employed the active faculties of man in every department of life.

As a source of a very lively as well as pure pleasure, reading is become the never-failing amusement of that considerable part of the community, which the circumstances of profession, sex, or inclination, have confined to a sedentary life. The age is said to be dissipated; and the most superficial observation will justify the complaint. Yet it must, on the other hand, be acknowledged, that it is most extensively enlightened. Books that possess originality and real merit are still read with avidity. Circulating libraries, furnished with valuable as well as trifling works, and societies established for the purchase of new publications, abound throughout the kingdom. The stream of national knowledge is certainly diffuse; nor is there sufficient reason to assert, what some have maintained, that it is become shallow by diffusion. If the productions of those who have gone before are richer and more solid, it reflects no disgrace on their followers, whose discoveries are of necessity anticipated by the first investigators. He who first opens the mine will return laden with treasure at an easy rate. He who succeeds may, with more sagacity and labour, acquire less; nor should it detract from his praise, that he brings forth little where little remained.

In this advanced stage of literature, much of the student's life is of course employed in retracing the progress of those who have preceded him. He heaps up ancient knowledge; and if he make new discoveries, has often little time, even if he has inclination and ability, to communicate them in a correct and graceful manner. There is no doubt, but that many of the literati who have never written, are at least

equal in the extent of their knowledge to the writers whom they study and admire. They have never written, perhaps from indolence, and perhaps from a want of a power to utter, with agreeable facility, what they apprehend with clearness. These amateurs of science must be supplied with a constant succession of books; and it is found, by experience, that few books please more cordially, or at least excite attention more forcibly, than those of contemporary authors. It appears, then, that, for the sake of the learned as well as the common reader, the multiplication of books, though it has sometimes been lamented, ought, upon the whole, to be encouraged, No one is compelled to read what he does not approve. A sumptuous entertainment is prepared, nor should the guest find fault with the number or variety of the dishes. They are all laid before him with design to give him pleasure, and it is easy to select that which is capable of affording it, and to refuse all that is insipid or disgustful. "Store," says the vulgar proverb, "is no sore."

Modern authors are naturally disposed to justify to themselves and others the addition which they make to the number of books. They are unwilling to suppose that every subject is anticipated; that all the avenues to fame are closed; that the knowledge acquired by study, and adorned by the expression of genius, is incapable of obtaining its proper reward, the praise of every ingenuous and congenial mind. It may fail in bringing returns of lucre; but it may be amply compensated by esteem. Literary productions continue, therefore, to multiply: and every writer finds some plausible apology for presenting to the public an additional volume. Is any harm done? Is society injured? Nothing is so easy as neglect; and no man is compelled to read what gives him neither pleasure nor information.

No. LI.

LETTERS THE SOURCE OF SOLID CONSOLATION.

THE sacred writers, the heathen philosophers, all who have either thought or written with solidity, have agreed, that man is born to trouble, and that few and evil are his days. The moral poet Euripides has said, that to be a man is sufficient plea for being miserable; and who, indeed, has not felt this truth?

Yet it is at the same time true, that the kind hand of Providence has scattered flowers as well as thorns in the road of life;[1] and the great skill required is to select those that are perennial,—those that are pleasing and salutary,—those that do not bud, blow, and wither in a day,—from those that shine with transient lustre, or conceal poisonous qualities under a vivid foliage.

Among the many benefits of a classical and comprehensive education, there are few which ought to recommend it more, than that it enables those who have truly and effectually received it, to derive the purest, the sweetest, the most elegant, and the least injurious pleasures from themselves and from reflection. The man of taste and learning creates, as it were, a little world of his own, in which he exercises his faculties; and he feels his most exalted satisfactions arising from things the existence of which is scarcely known to the vulgar mind, bent on animal enjoyments, or on the acquisition of money.

The parent in the middle ranks of life, who is able to place his son above dependence, contributes more to his real happiness, when he gives him a taste for the classics, and for all those liberal studies which will exalt his nature, than when, by making him a trader without a gentleman's education, he affords him an opportunity of hereafter shining in the mean magnificence of wealth, unaccompanied with taste, elegance, and liberality. To possess thousands with the narrow

spirit of a mere shop-keeper, can add but little respectability. But to possess a just taste for a Virgil, and for the other fine writers and artists whom the world has long and justly admired; to be capable of feeling their beauties, with only the common comforts and conveniencies of life, will confer an elegance and dignity of mind, and will cause a finer pleasure than was ever known to a Crassus or a Clive. What is a man of a coarse mind and great riches, but a steward for a worthier and more intelligent heir?

Where, indeed, shall we find objects capable of attaching the mind in every stage of life, in every condition, in every time, in every place, but in the walks of literature? These studies, says Cicero, in a passage which can never be too often repeated, afford nourishment to our youth, delight our old age, adorn prosperity, supply a refuge in adversity, are a constant source of pleasure at home, are no impediment while abroad, attend us in the night season, and accompany us in our travels and retirements. The great orator, philosopher, and statesman, spoke the dictates of his own experience. To his hours of dejection and privacy we owe many of his finest treatises, in the composition of which he awhile forgot his own and his country's calamity, and rose above the meanness and villany of the politics of his time.

Sorrow seeks solitude for indulgence. Company may dissipate the lighter cares; but it appears like mockery to real woe. Add to this, that to mix with company while under the influence of grief, unless it is the company of familiar friends, is a violation of the rules of propriety, since it tends to throw a damp on that cheerfulness, to promote which is one of the ends of society. But solitude invites to reading; and amid the great variety of books, some one may always be found in unison with our own temper. In the retire-

ments of our library, no insolent intruder can upbraid us for disinclination or incapacity to taste convivial enjoyment. There we find balsam for every wound of the mind, and a lenient medicine for every intellectual disease.

When the prospects which present themselves in the common road of life are dark and dreary, the man of taste can step aside into the elysium of poesy, and tread the flowery paths and view the gilded scenes which fancy raises with the magic of enchantment. The ingenious biographer of the poet Gray has informed us, that the most approved productions of his friend were brought forth soon after the death of one whom the poet loved. Sorrow led him to seek for solace of the muse. That the muse smiled on her votary, every reader of taste has already acknowledged. Sacred history has acquainted us with the power of music over the passions, and there is little doubt but the verse as well as the lyre of David was able to soothe the troubled spirits to repose.

It is difficult to be attached to the common objects of human pursuit without feeling sordid cares or troublesome passions. But in the pursuits of learning all is liberal, noble, generous. They require and promote that comprehensive mode of thinking, which overlooks the little and mean occupations of the vulgar mind. To the man of philosophical observation, the world appears as a theatre, in which the busy actors toil and weary themselves for his amusement. He sees the emptiness of many objects which are ardently pursued; he is acquainted with the false glitter that surrounds him; he knows how short and unsubstantial are the good and evil that excite all the ardour of pursuit and abhorrence; and can, therefore, derive a degree of delight from reflection, of which they who are deeply, and even successfully, interested in them can never par-

ticipate. Notwithstanding the charms of opulence, Socrates and Epictetus have attracted more admirers, and probably enjoyed more tranquillity of mind, than the richest publican of Athens and Rome.

It is true, that learning should be pursued as a qualification for the several professions of civil life; but, excluding, for argument's sake, the motives of interest and ambition, it is to be cultivated for its own sake by those who understand and wish to enjoy, under every circumstance, the utmost attainable happiness. Next to religion, it is the best and sweetest source of comfort in those hours of dejection which every mortal must sometimes experience. It constitutes one of the most solid pillars to support the tottering fabric of human felicity, and commonly contributes as much to virtue as to calm and rational enjoyment. A life of learning is for the most part, and comparatively, a life of innocence.

No. LII.

ON THE EXCELLENCE OF LORD BACON AS A MORALIST.

No acts are so truly our own as those of the understanding. The world has long agreed in admiration of Alexander, Cæsar, and Charles of Sweden; and the remark of Cicero seems not to have occurred to them, that the glory of a general is in great measure derived from the merit of those who obey him, and that a thousand contingencies must conspire to give efficacy to the best concerted plans of military operation. Fortune claims a great share of the glory in every conquest.

But the works of genius are commonly produced in solitude. The mind forms its own design, and pursues within itself all the methods that conduce to its accomplishment. Fortune has little influence in retarding or promoting its purposes. If, then, the proportion of glory which ought to redound to an individual is to be

estimated by personal merit, independently of external aid and accidental events, the triumphs of ingenuity must be held more honourable than the triumphs of valour, and a conquest of the intellectual world more worthy the dignified page of history than the subjection of the whole terraqueous globe. Such a conqueror is the great Bacon, the intellectual Alexander; and when the world shall have corrected its erroneous judgment, he will be placed in a rank far superior to the son of Philip, who at best was a vain-glorious soldier, whom Aristotle instructed and fortune favoured.

A popular historian of England has, however, depreciated the merit of this glory of our nation. Hume has plainly pronounced our Bacon inferior to the Florentine philosopher, Galileo; and he attributes the great applause that has been paid to him to the illiberal partiality of our national spirit. Something more reasonable than the suggestions of this spirit will prompt many to attribute his detraction to national envy, the narrow jealousy of a mean and selfish sophist.

The testimony of foreigners, who cannot be biassed by this prejudice, is truly honourable to our great philosopher. Baco Verulamius, for so they call him, is more frequently mentioned, and with higher applause, than Galileo, the ingenious philosopher of Italy. Great as have been the praises bestowed on Bacon in his own country, they have never reached the high encomiums of foreign universities.

It was the great mistake of Aristotle to have accommodated his physics to his logic, instead of rendering his logic subservient to his physics; and, as the critics have observed, by inverting the natural order of things, to have subjected the end to the means. To remove this error, Bacon invented his *novum organum* in which he teaches to reason by induction; a more

effectual method of eliciting truth, than the antiquated and trifling forms of a perfect syllogism. This work is acknowledged to be his master-piece; and its beneficial effect in ascertaining science, by reducing it to the test of experiment, is alone sufficient to entitle him to all the fame he enjoys.

But his predominant excellence in promoting the science of nature seems almost to have absorbed his glory as a moralist. His genius, however, formed to penetrate into all subjects on which it directed its beams, made those discoveries in common life and familiar manners which it might be supposed would be less likely to occur to the deep and recluse speculator than to the man of business. In all his moral writings there is a solidity of remark, which enables the reader to select something useful on every perusal. It is this original and substantial excellence which gives a grace to his writings, not to be deformed by a style by no means uniformly elegant; though Sir Richard Baker, whose taste was not equal to his knowledge, asserts of it, that Bacon has written in so sweet a style, that, like manna, it pleases every palate. Be it remembered that he wrote in Latin, and that the translation commonly read is very inadequate to the original.

Men of profound science commonly excel more in judgment than in wit. But Bacon is acknowledged to have displayed a very considerable degree of wit in his moral lucubrations. Rapin says, there is more of it in his ethics than in any of his writings; for which I think a reason may be easily assigned. Observations on men and manners admit a playful ingenuity of thought; but the features of severe science are not often to be relaxed, scarcely ever with propriety, by the sallies of a sportive fancy.

I have frequently regretted, that so sagacious an

understanding was not oftener employed in speculations more generally useful than those sublime subjects of science which are unconnected with practice. Had he employed that subtlety of observation in remarking and describing manners which is conspicuous in some useless conjectures in natural philosophy, there is little doubt but the world would have received great light, where light is most wanted, in the art of regulating our passions, and the conduct of life. The little he has left us is an invaluable treasure; and the work I should most wish to recover, if all his productions were lost, is the "Moral Essays."

The "Advancement of Learning," though much less read than the superficial works of later times, is one of the most entertaining and improving books in the language. The remarks in it strike the mind with such an evidence of conviction, that the truth discovered pleases like that derived from mathematical demonstration. The thoughts of Bacon have this peculiar excellence, that they not only please and convince by their justness, but lead the mind to think still farther on the subject, and assist it in its efforts. Not like the trifling writer, who is forced to make the most advantage of a good idea by dilating it, as the gold-beater extends a little gold, Bacon leaves the reader to comment on a solid reflection, when he has once given it utterance in a clear, concise, and forcible expression.

His reputation as an historian, though great during his life, seems gradually to have declined, and is now nearly lost. His Reign of Henry the Seventh is only read by those whose veneration for him induces them to acquaint themselves with all his works.

Whatever defects the prevalence of a bad taste may have occasioned in some of his productions, we may compare them altogether to a venerable pile of Gothic architecture, which, though it has not to boast the

grace of Grecian elegance, or the finery of the Chinese style, possesses a solidity and substance which will cause it to endure when not one stone shall be left upon another in the edifices of a more refined or ostentatious, but superficial, age.

When we compare this great man's writings with some of the weaknesses of his life, we are tempted to exclaim, with a modern delineator of characters, Alas, poor human nature!

No. LIII.

ON THE CHOICE OF A PROFESSION.

MUCH has been said on the necessity of discovering the genius at a puerile age, and of consulting nature in the choice of a profession. Yet, after all, chance or lucrative views usually determine the boy's destination.

It is, indeed, by no means easy to find in the child the distinguishing excellence of the future man. The mind, in the course of a few years, appears to undergo a total renovation. Different faculties, like different trees, put forth the blossoms which presage the fruit at earlier or later periods, according to some interior arrangement which eludes research. They who have taken the most pains to learn the natural propensity of the young mind, and have been led, by some striking appearance, to choose a future employment for it, have found their pupils no more skilful or successful than those who were directed to the same plan merely by fortuitous circumstances or prudential considerations. Few parents, and few superintendents of education, are capable of forming this judgment; a judgment that must proceed from an intimate knowledge of the human heart and head, and a long experience of the changes produced in them by time and accidents.

But it is less difficult to discover the advantages and

disadvantages of the various employments of life, than to point out those who are formed by nature to fill them with honour.

The clerical profession seems to be well adapted to promote the happiness of him who can command his passions, and who is of a contented disposition. Such a one is a Christian philosopher, and possesses the agreeable and estimable privilege of instructing his fellow-creatures in moral, philosophical, and religious truths. He is at liberty to pursue one of the pleasantest and the most tranquil paths of life,—that which leads through the quiet yet diversified regions of general learning. He is usually respected much more than those whose birth and fortunes have placed them in a higher sphere. He is more a master of his time, that invaluable possession, than the rest of the busy world, because his engagements are at an appointed season. But if to accumulate money, either from the necessity of providing for a family or from avarice, be his object, he will find himself miserable, because he is placed in a situation where his desire cannot often be gratified with ease and honour. The stipends of the most useful part of the clergy, those who officiate, are often not greater than the earnings of a hireling mechanic. Yet an appearance of a competency must be supported by the curate, not from pride alone, but from a laudable design of accomplishing the purposes of his profession. Such is the world, that in vain will he preach, in vain will he set a good example, if a mean appearance and mode of living contradict the received opinions of congruity, and produce contempt. There are, indeed, many rich and high preferments in the church; but these, it is observed, do not often fall to merit as the reward of it, but are usually lavished where interest and family connexion and borough influence put in their irresistible claim. They

seem, in this age, to be considered as supplemental provisions for the younger brothers of parliamentary patrons. He, therefore, who has neither interest nor connexions, must learn, when he enters on this profession, to view the goods of this world in the light in which they have been considered by the wisest and the best of mortals. He must seek and place his happiness in conscious virtue, and the hope of obtaining the favour of the Supreme Being.

More families have been raised to civil eminence by the study of the law than by any other pursuit. Riches and honours have been profusely accumulated on its successful professors. The multiplication of statutes, and the variety of forms in modern times, have, indeed, rendered the study uncommonly intricate and laborious, and it seems, therefore, to merit uncommon rewards. But distinguished success is necessarily confined to few, and many have worn out a good constitution in perusing books of all others the least amusing, without any return of honour or of profit. In this age, the profession is over-run by the multitude of nominal, if not real, students. Formerly the heir to a good estate was brought up to little else than fox-hunting; and to be in at the death, and reputed a sportsman, were the objects of his highest ambition; but now he is usually entered at an inn of court, advised to read Blackstone, and called to the bar. And though he should never succeed there, yet it is certainly better to let a young man have a profession to employ some of his thoughts during youth, than to suffer him to live in constant idleness and folly. But when, after a life of useful labour, the advocate is rewarded with a judge's appointment, his labour does not cease. Ease, his proper recompence, remains still at a distance. Perhaps, during the time of business, there are few employments more irksome

and unhealthy. The truly valuable rewards are, indeed, seldom obtained in the law till age and application have weakened the powers of perception and the sense of pleasure; and, when these are decayed, what are external advantages? Upon the whole, we may conclude that, though the profession of the law, when attended with success, is lucrative, and well adapted to raise and establish a family, it is seldom consistent with the enjoyment of personal tranquillity, and, like other human pursuits, ends in vanity and vexation.

The preparation for the practice of physic is by no means agreeable. A philosopher may, indeed, attend a dissection with pleasure, as affording an opportunity for the observation of nature; but it must always be disgusting to view the loathsome objects of an infirmary. Yet this discipline is necessary; for books alone are of little use. After all the expence and labour of education, it is mortifying to the sensibility of merit to observe those chiefly encouraged who have little else to recommend them than confidence, mean arts of insinuation, and external grace of behaviour. He whose solid knowledge induces him to speak with diffidence on the success of a prescription, is thought by the generality less able than the bold pretender. With all his physiological science, if he has not the address to conciliate the whims of fashion on his side, his sense of feeling will seldom be soothed by the grateful application of a fee. Men of sense may respect him; but he must be enriched by old women and fools. When, however, he is sufficienty employed, it must be an additional pleasure to the natural satisfaction of success, to find his own emolument arising from giving ease to the distressed and miserable. Yet it is by no means advisable that any should be trained to this profession who do not possess such a degree of indc-

pendence as may enable them to be easy under the neglect of a capricious world; a world that does not know its best friends, but is deceived by plausibility.

The army affords a fine asylum for those spirits which are too restless for domestic life. But though it has many charms for a warm imagination, it seems little adapted to give solid comfort at any time, much less in the season of infirmity and in old age. It is happy for the commonwealth, as things are now constituted, that the acknowledged gentility of the profession obliterates the sense of its hardships and inconveniencies, and that boys are attracted by finery.

Still less suited to afford tranquil pleasure, the navy is yet always supplied even by those who have ease and affluence at home. To be confined with a crowd for many months in a wooden machine, is a situation which nothing but use and example could render tolerable. This lot, however, must fall to some; and it does not appear that they to whom it has fallen are less happy than the rest of mankind. Providence wisely and kindly fits the disposition to external circumsances. Thoughtlessness is serviceable to the defence of the community.

The employment of merchandise is commonly esteemed less liberal than any of these; and it is true that the preparation for it, and the arts of keeping and improving money, have a tendency to contract the sentiments and corrupt the heart. The liberal professions have some connexion with public spirit, with science and philanthropy. The trader's views seem to centre in private emolument; and though he is highly beneficial to the community, it seems not from intention; on the contrary, he appears ever ready to take advantage of it without injury to his character, and consequently to his interest. Yet it must be confessed, that in our commercial country, and in the present

age, the mercantile orders have sometimes shown themselves truly honourable and enlightened; and he would act imprudently and ridiculously who should slight a good opportunity of introducing his son to a successful merchandise, merely because it has not been held so liberal as the profession of him who starves with a doctor's degree. Yet it is lamentable to degrade one's nature in order to advance one's fortune.

All the occupations of life are found to have their advantages and disadvantages admirably adapted to preserve the just equilibrium of happiness. This we may confidently assert, that, whatever are the inconveniencies of any of them, they are all preferable to a life of total inaction; to that wretched listlessness which is constrained to pursue pleasure as a business, and which, by rendering it the object of severe and unvaried attention, destroys its very essence.

No. LIV.

ON AFFECTATION OF THE CHRACTER OF SPORTSMEN.

ANIMALS that are hurtful to man, and are therefore destroyed by him, seem to have an instinctive knowledge of their enemy, and avoid his approach before they can have experienced his power or his contrivance. Man likewise possesses a counteracting instinct, which leads him to the recesses of the forest, and bears him with alacrity through all the dangers and fatigues of the chase.

This instinct was necessary to his subsistence, as well as defence, in the savage state; for the prey that he caught was his only food. Implanted in his constitution, it continues to operate with great force, even when he is advanced to a condition in which his wants are supplied by the inventions and improvements of civilised life.

In our country, where every improvement of life is

carried to an exalted height, the instinct of the hunter is certainly not destroyed by the new propensities which are superinduced in a state of civilisation. There is scarcely an individual, of those who are not refined to a very uncommon degree, who delights not in the sports of the field. The rich must not flatter themselves with an idea that their taste in this respect is peculiar to themselves; for there is really no taste more vulgar, and more prevalent among the lowest orders, than the taste for destroying animals protected by the legislature for the amusement of the wealthy. The mechanic leaves, without remorse, the employment which is to support himself and his family, to follow the esquire in the chase of a fox; and would rather shoot a pheasant or ensnare a trout than earn a guinea by his labour. The glee with which he recounts the adventures of the pursuit proves it to be a pleasure congenial to his heart, and an instinct in the savage state.

A wise politician, who did not wish to monopolize the delights of the chase, would encourage this natural propensity among the vagabond and the unemployed; for, besides its utility in the destruction of vermin, it tends to infuse a spirit, a hardiness, and a subtlety, well suited to qualify such persons for the dangers and the hardships, the contrivances and the stratagems, of a naval and military life. It might be considered, also, that the man who is excluded from more liberal employments by the lowness of his station, may render himself a useful member of society by catching moles and hares, rats and foxes.

But it is really no less ridiculous than lamentable, that the heir to an estate, the man of education, should forego the honours and pleasures of social, civil, and literary exertions, merely to enjoy the delight of joining a pack of hounds in the destruction of a helpless

animal. Yet the truth is, this instinct, as I have ventured to call it, operates with great violence among those whose opportunities for improvement might enable them to subdue every relick of savage humanity.

The nobles of our land, whose example might have a salutary influence in disseminating every useful quality, are sometimes destitute of all ideas of excellence beyond the sphere of a stable. They, indeed, indulge their propensities of this kind without control. The laws are on their side, and the poor man is prevented from destroying the vermin that fattens on his substance. The game-laws are, however, confessed by those who enact them to be a disgrace to an enlightened age. At the same time that they infringe on liberty, they argue a very considerable degree of barbarism in the ancient legislature.

The love of rural sports, with all their appendages of horses, dogs, and jockeys, is at present carried so far, that the gentleman by birth labours to lower himself to the rank of a huntsman, and often dresses himself in the garb of a groom or hostler. It would not, in the present day, be surprising to meet a privy-counsellor, or a judge, in the exterior of a whipper-in.

And why should they be censured? says the pretender to superior reason. Is a man less honest or less learned according to any difference in his dress? It is certain that, if the world were filled with philosophers, it would be a circumstance of little moment. But every thing that lowers the great in the eyes of the vulgar injures society by disturbing the settled climax of subordination. The vulgar are awed into submission by no methods so effectually as by a respectable outside. Were a clergyman, for instance, to ascend the pulpit in the dress of a jockey, he might speak with the tongue of an angel, and yet be disregarded.

His appearance, even on other occasions, in the livery of a sportsman, though it may make him pass for a knowing one, and recommend him to his patron, the esquire of his parish, will degrade him among his other parishioners, and contribute to render his order contemptible, and his instructions abortive.

The influence of dress on manners is considerable, though not much attended to by the moralist. Horace, indeed, relates that when Eutrapelus wished to do any one an injury, he gave him fine clothes. The cause of an effect thus produced in the disposition by the external habit is, that the mind insensibly adopts something of the character it personates externally. There is a natural love of congruity, which insensibly causes the behaviour to correspond with the dress. He who assumes all the externals of low life soon exhibits proofs of internal abasement. If the peer condescends to spend his days in a stable, and to dress like his groom, he will soon differ from him in those circumstances alone which render his degeneracy more conspicuous. It will not be thought calumny to assert that our own times have exhibited some melancholy examples of this disgraceful self-humiliation.

A taste for the pleasures of the race is, indeed, justified by the example of a most refined people. But the Greeks, it is imagined, did not adopt it as affording an opportunity for gaming. In our age and nation, it is warmly patronised by the illustrious and noble, not from liberal, but mean views; and it is frequented by those whose profession it is to take advantage of their superiors' folly; and these, by a strange event, are admitted to familiarity with the great, whose wealth they pillage, and whose principles they corrupt. The stand or gallery at a horse-race has been likened (I hope unjustly) to a Pandæmonium.

Rural sports, also, when not pursued with an atten-

tion greater than their importance will admit, nor as the business of life, afford a healthy and a manly relaxation. But when all the circumstances which relate to them are considered with a seriousness and pursued with an ardour which momentous business only can justify, the moralist cannot help lamenting that so much zeal and industry is misplaced. When they lead the rich and liberal into company and occupations which degrade their dignity, he cannot but express an indignant sentiment. He sees with regret, at a time when national virtue is particularly required, some of those who have most influence in a nation totally engaged with dogs, horses, and grooms.

To value a noble animal for its use, to admire it for its beauty and swiftness, to love it for its generous alacrity in the service of man, is natural and reasonable. It is, indeed, the mark of an amiable disposition to observe and to be pleased with the manners and actions of the poor animals whom nature has subjected to our command, and who contribute so much to our pleasure and convenience. If fidelity and generosity are lovely qualities, the dog and the horse have a peculiar claim to a share of perfection. But they who circumscribe their ideas within the verge of a stable, who prefer the company of their irrational animals to the society of a fellow-creature, seem to be in danger of gradually assimilating with the nature of their beasts, and of acquiring a degree of irrationality.

No. LV.

ON THE VANITY AND FOLLY OF DEPARTING FROM OUR PROPER SPHERE TO BECOME AUTHORS AND ORATORS, WITHOUT PREVIOUS AND SUFFICIENT PREPARATION.

It has been observed, that the writer who declaims against vanity is probably, at the same time, under its influence. He aims at glory by declaiming against it.

There are, however some species of vanity which, in comparison with others, are not only excusable, but almost laudable. The vanity of wishing to appear in print, when the person who entertains it has been well educated, and is free from the necessity of attention to any particular business for his support, frequently operates as a stimulus to industry; and industry seldom fails of becoming, in some mode or other, beneficial. If he who is really a student by profession feels an ambition to become an author, though he should fail through the defect of his abilities, yet he cannot be said to have acted out of character; neither does it often happen, that the time and attention which he has given to his work is ruinous to himself or family; for study is his employment, and he has been labouring in his vocation. He has innocently amused, and perhaps improved himself, though unable to communicate with success either improvement or amusement to others. His vanity may be pardoned, though the fruits of it cannot be praised or admired.

But it is common in this age to find traders, and even manufacturers of a very subordinate rank, so fascinated with the brilliancy of literary fame, or so over-run with what has been called the itch of scribbling, that they devote that time and thought to tagging wretched rhymes, or penning paltry prose, which ought to be spent in providing food and clothing for themselves and their families.

The unfortunate man who has once contracted this lamentable distemper immediately feels an aversion for his trade or manual employment. He considers himself as a great natural genius, who has been brought up by his injudicious parents to a business far beneath him, and for which he is totally unfit. He is too delicate for hard or disagreeable labour, and too volatile for the phlegmatic employment of a counter or a count-

ing-house. But it is a certain truth, that we seldom succeed in the mode of life which we do not love; and distress of every kind is the certain consequence of relinquishing the service of Mercury to pay court to the Muses.

I wish the literary trader or mechanic to consider how very much out of character a student by profession would appear, were he to invade the province of the work-shop, and to lay down the pen and the book for the chisel, or the hammer, or the last, or the needle, or the trowel. He would succeed but ill in his studies if he chose to spend his time at the counter and in the warehouse, instead of the library; and the trader and the mechanic may assure themselves, that notwithstanding the flattering suggestions of their own vanity, they usually appear no less absurd, and succeed no less unhappily, in writing verses, or composing orations, than the student would appear in making a shoe, or retailing cheese and haberdashery.

This unhappy rage for wasting paper is not only attended with the loss of fame, but of money. The materials necessary for printing, and the modes of announcing the important production to the public, are unavoidably attended with considerable expense; and, alas! the sale is usually so inconsiderable, as scarcely to pay for the wear of pens, and the consumption of ink. But it is really lamentable to see that money unnecessarily expended on paper and print which ought to go to butchers, bakers, brewers, and chandlers. I cannot help thinking it a benevolent action, when the periodical publications treat productions which originate from such authors as low tradesmen and mechanics, with sarcasm and ridicule. Though the lash of criticism may make the simple culprit smart for a little while, it may have a most beneficial effect on him in saving himself from ridicule, or his family from

starving. A mercantile or mechanical author, swelled with fancied importance, and neglecting his business in pursuit of literary fame, would furnish no bad topic for theatrical derision. Indeed, any effectual method of exploding a folly which is so pregnant with misery in private life is greatly desirable; and no treatment can be so effectual in suppressing what originates in vanity as that which mortifies it most,—contempt and ridicule.

But this literary madness of the trading and mechanical orders displays itself in various symptoms. If it produces many writers, I believe it produces more orators. They who cannot write, or at least cannot spell, are more inclined to let their genius evaporate by the volubility of the tongue than of the pen; by which method their defects in the science of orthography are concealed in elegance and pathos of elocution. The subjects are invariably politics and religion. If they can read, they derive political arguments from newspaper essays, and religious from Bolingbroke, Tindal, and the rest of that low and contemptible set of writers. If they cannot read, they succeed better still; for then the arguments must necessarily proceed from immediate inspiration.

Now, I wish I could prevail on those redoubtable rhetoricians to be hearers as well as speakers, and to listen to a very powerful and pathetic species of oratory,—the cries and distress of a family at home, reduced to a state of starving, while the orator, instead of mending soles and heel-pieces, or vending small wares, is disgorging nonsense on an audience of fools, who must be even more foolish than himself if they are able to listen to him with patience.

To all writers and orators who might be much more usefully and honourably employed at the anvil or the loom, in the shop or the counting-house, I will recom-

mend the consideration of how many requisites are necessary to form a distinguished writer and a good orator.—No man can communicate what is valuable to others, unless he has himself previously accumulated a plentiful store. A liberal education, and much reading and reflection, superadded to a competent share of natural ability, can alone enable a writer to produce what may deserve the attention of a polished age. More leisure than can fall to the lot of those who live by mercantile or manual industry is necessary to attain an eminence in literature. And with respect to the oratory which some of the lower orders are so fond of affecting, it is usually a habit of vain and noisy babbling, little dissimilar to the ravings of madness, and not unfrequently leading to it. I have myself seen the dreadful effects of methodistical enthusiasm. Many an honest tailor or shoemaker has turned preacher, and hurried himself, and some of his hearers, into absolute lunacy. And even that kind of speechifying with some persons in the mercantile walks of life are so fond of displaying in clubs and committees, often tends to no other purpose but to waste time, and fill the speaker with a self-conceit, which sometimes terminates in his ruin, by giving his ambition a wrong direction. I am well assured, that a misplaced attention to letters, and a foolish vanity in scribbling in newspapers and periodical repositories, have contributed greatly to increase the number of advertisements in the London Gazette.

Nothing can be more laudable than that merchants, traders, and mechanics, should fill up their intervals of leisure in reading books adapted to their various tastes, abilities, and previous improvements. But they must be cautious lest the charms of literary pursuits operate upon them in such a manner as to bring on that fatal distemper, the scribbling itch, or the rage of oratory.

The manuscripts which they should delight in composing should be day-books, ledgers, bills, and letters to correspondents; and their rhetoric should chiefly be displayed behind the counter. The more of these the better; but when arithmetical figures give place to rhymes, and posting to prosing, then it is time to beware of a commission of bankruptcy.

The evil which I endeavour to remove is really a serious one. The poor scribbler or prater may be a very honest and good man; but his weakness, in this respect, will probably involve him in miseries, which weakness alone cannot deserve. His ill success as an author, followed as it will be by slights, ridicule, and censure, must be to him a perpetual source of vexation. Thus his favourite pursuit terminates in disappointment, and his necessary pursuit, his trade or employment, on which he depends for bread, fails to supply his wants, because it is neglected.

It is one of the best ornaments, as well as the surest means of success and happiness, in all the branches of the mercantile life, to be steady in an attention to what is called the main-chance. Letters may form the amusement of the trader, but not his business. Letters, however, will soon be the business of his life, if he devotes himself to composition, and learns to pant for literary fame. Letters, pursued within proper limits, will give his mind an elegance, and prevent it from being contracted by a constant attention to lucre; but cultivated with the ardour and constancy of a professed student, or author, or orator, they seldom fail of bringing on a complication of distress, to which their satisfactions cannot be a counterpoise. It would not be a bad rule if merchants, shopkeepers, and manufacturers, who feel an inclination to poetry and other literary amusements, were always to make a point of providing for their wives and daughters before they

think of devoting themselves entirely to those fantastic and extravagant mistresses, Thalia, Melpomene, and their seven sisters.

No. LVI.

HINTS TO THOSE WHO ARE DESIGNED FOR A MERCANTILE LIFE.

It is no wonder that many fail in their employments and professions, when it is considered by what slender and childish motives they are often fixed in the pursuit which is to continue for life. One boy admires a red coat and a cockade, or a pair of trowsers and a jacket, and therefore he will be a soldier or a sailor. Another thinks it cannot but be a perpetual source of happiness to live amongst a profusion of plums and sugar, and therefore he will be a grocer. An early and accidental association of ideas is formed, by which happiness is united with some peculiar mode of life, and a choice is made before reason or experience can possibly have suggested a cause for judicious preference.

The choice of boys at an early age is certainly too ill-founded to direct their parents in fixing their future mode of life. What success can be expected in a plan of conduct which originates in the whim of an infant? A parent, therefore, must study the disposition of his child, and endeavour to conform it to that profession or trade to which he has the best opportunity of introducing him with advantage. The young mind may be moulded like wax, with a due degree of skill, to almost any figure.

In an insular country like ours, where a great part of the commodities consumed by the people are imported, trade must of necessity constitute the employment of the majority. I consider it therefore, of very great consequence that particular instructions should be adapted to young persons, whose lives are to be spent in the

engagements of commerce. They are usually fixed at the desk and the counter at so early an age, as almost to exclude all instruction but that which relates to the confined views of one particular occupation. Were I to offer advice to a young man intended for the commercial walk, I would address him in a manner somewhat similar to the following. It is impossible that what I say should be exactly accommodated to all circumstances and situations; but yet it may suggest to all, such hints as are capable of improvement and particular application.

"The wisdom of our ancestors has prescribed, that seven years shall be spent in learning the exercise of a trade or a mechanical art. This, like many others of their institutions which the vanity of the present age is apt to despise, is founded on substantial reasons. Supposing you to begin at fourteen, seven years bring you to the age of twenty-one; a period at which it is quite early enough to assume the liberty of manhood. Nor, indeed, can those habits be formed with certainty which are to continue during life in a shorter space.

"Seven years, however, it must be confessed, are a very considerable portion of life at any age, and particularly valuable in the vernal season, when the seeds of every amiable and useful quality are to be sown and cultivated. You will, therefore, be particularly careful to employ it in a constant application to useful pursuits.

"The knowledge of your particular business will claim, after your moral and religious duties, your first and longest attention. Be not afraid of incurring among your companions the appellation of a dull cit or a spiritless plodder. Such names are usually the poor consolations of those who envy the happiness which must attend the propriety of your conduct. Proceed, therefore, in the regular performance of your

duties, animated by the approbation of your own heart, and of your friends and superintendents, and despising that ridicule which originates only in malice, though it has been sufficiently powerful to ruin many. I need not inform you, that writing, arithmetic, book-keeping, and all the particular mysteries, as they are called, of your particular occupation, will leave you little time for inaction. The less, indeed the better. Vice and misery are almost the certain consequences of your not knowing how to employ your time. Great cities, where commerce is chiefly carried on, abound with temptations, and few are found more frequently in the haunts of debauchery and dissipation than clerks and apprentices.

"Since, however, it is impossible but that you should have some leisure, I very seriously recommend it to you to acquire a taste for good books; I say, good books, for you may injure your mind, and ruin your fortune, by an indiscriminate and improper choice. The readers in your way of life seldom read any thing but novels, plays, and licentious productions of every species. Besides that these have a tendency to corrupt the morals of young men in general, they have usually an influence peculiarly hurtful on the mind of the young trader; for they almost invariably represent the essential virtues of a trader, such as honesty, sobriety, punctuality, and industry, as contemptible and ridiculous. The very name and character of a trader, in plays and novels, are low and vulgar. The object held out as a model for imitation is usually some dissipated rake, who, with every vice and unfortunate failing which tends to make himself miserable, and to break a parent's heart, is described as a fine fellow, worthy of universal love and admiration.

Let me entreat you to summon resolution enough to avoid such reading till your judgment is mature, your passions regulated, and your principles formed. If

you have been fortunate enough to have acquired a little knowledge of the classics at your school, preserve and improve it. Read and reflect upon the histories of Greece, Rome, and your own country. There are books of morality in the English language as full of entertainment for a mind unvitiated as any novel.

"A taste for good books will have a happy influence on your temper, and will tend to secure your conduct, not only by filling up your time innocently, but by suggesting to your mind wise rules and useful maxims. Good books will teach you to know yourself and your situation, and to set a just value on those things which ignorant avarice and ambition pursue with restless avidity, and at the same time with little pure and solid enjoyment. They will enlarge your views, and give you a liberality of sentiment and manners. If you attend solely to the means of getting money, your mind will gradually become narrow. You will consider money as the only good. Your eyes and your heart will be shut to all those other objects of delight with which the God of nature has profusely furnished the residence of his favourite creature. This is an enlightened age; and the man of fortune, but of illiberal mind, will be pitied, if not despised and neglected. He will find few associates but among those who are as vulgar as himself, and whose riches, if they possess riches, cannot render them respectable.

"But moderation is necessary in that which is laudable; and while I recommend to you an attention to letters, I must remind you, that they are only to form your recreation, and not your business. Be contented with reading: beware of scribbling verses when you ought to be posting your accounts. A little applause bestowed on your rhymes may be your ruin. It may give your ambition a wrong object, and lead you astray, like the dancing vapour of a misty evening. Be cau-

tious of raising your ideas above your situation. Dare to be what you really are; and, if you think your situation and character require to be elevated and adorned, elevate and adorn them yourself by exemplary behaviour. If you wish to become respectable, you will succeed in your wish, by raising the sphere in which you are placed, but not by showing that you think it too humble for a person of your exalted ideas and noble way of thinking.

"You must beware of entertaining too early the fatal affectation of shining as a fine gentleman and a man of pleasure. To support these characters, supposing them consistent with innocence, a fund of money is absolutely necessary. Probably it can be procured only by importuning and offending a parent, by incurring debt, or by fraudulent practices; each of which methods is almost a certain source of ruin and infamy. Add to this, that he who is always adorning his person, and frequenting theatres, assemblies, and public gardens, will be so overrun with folly and vanity, that no room will be left for the solid virtues of the sober citizen. His ambition will take a new turn. Before the expiration of his apprenticeship, he will probably grow sick of his trade, get an ensigncy, if his father can afford to purchase one, and, if not, turn strolling player; and, at last, instead of becoming an alderman, or a respectable private citizen, degenerate to an infamous swindler, or become at last a beggar.

"I consider the manner in which a Sunday is spent in a great city, by the young men who are trained to trade and merchandise, as a matter of the highest consequence to their happiness. The master and mistress of the family are then usually at their country-house, or engaged in some rural excursion. There is no restraint and no amusement at home. The apprentice or clerk is glad to make use of his liberty,

and to fly from the solitude of a deserted house. Parties of pleasure are formed; improper and even vicious connexions made; and the poor young man often dates his greatest misfortunes from that day, the institution of which was designed to increase the virtue and happiness of mankind. Part of the day may be very reasonably and usefully devoted to innocent relaxation; but let that part consist of the intervals between divine service, or of that which remains at its conclusion.—Sunday affords a fine opportunity for indulging an inclination for reading; and I have no doubt, but that, in a few hours spent in this decent and profitable manner, there would be more pleasure than in galloping along Rotten-row, or driving a curricle to Richmond or to Windsor.

"I have been thus particular in suggesting advice to you for the conduct of an apprenticeship, because good conduct during that dangerous period, is a very promising presage of future success. I make use of the word apprenticeship, though I know that many are introduced to the superior houses of merchandise without the form of indentures, and without a limited term of preparation. But whatever time is spent in preparation, and whether it is spent at the counter or at the desk, the hints which I have thrown out may, I hope, be sometimes serviceable. If they save but one out of a thousand from ruin or injury, I shall be amply repaid for the trouble of my admonition.

"I will add but one more rule, and that shall be a general one. Learn to place a due value on the plain and homely qualities of common honesty, punctuality, diligence, and economy. Were these pursued with half the ardour with which the graces are courted and the vices adopted, there would be fewer bankrupts than there are, notwithstanding the taxes. Bad times are, indeed, injurious to commerce, and so also are bad

manners in the conductors of it. When both are combined in a remarkable degree, it is not to be wondered that there are complainings in our streets.

"With a mind enlightened and enlarged by proper education, and a heart furnished with sound principles, if you have fair opportunities, you will not often fail. You will probably rise to that honourable character, a British merchant, who has acquired opulence with unimpeached credit, and who is able to enjoy and adorn it with a noble liberality."

No. LVII.

ON THE SELFISHNESS OF MEN OF THE WORLD.

THE professed students of the art of pleasing as taught in the Chesterfieldian system, usually possess some qualities which, when seen in their true light, and without the varnish of deceit, are peculiarly unpleasing and extremely offensive. Indeed, the very motive which urges them to study this celebrated art is in itself most odious, as it consists of a desire to serve themselves alone, at the expense of every virtue connected with sincerity, and by making those the dupes of their artifice whose honesty has rendered them no less unsuspecting than amiable.

We all love ourselves, indeed, sufficiently well; but he who labours indiscriminately to please by obsequiousness and plausibility every one with whom he converses, however paradoxical the assertion may appear, is usually of all men the most selfish. A sincerely good and benevolent man will study to serve and to please men in proportion as they may deserve his attention, and as they may be pleased and served consistently with truth and honesty. He will be the friend of individuals; but always more a friend to truth than to any particular man. He will study to please where he can do it without deceit, and without meanly sacri-

ficing the liberty of a man, and accommodating his own opinions to the opinions of any company to which chance may introduce him. But the mere man of this world has learned to consider truth and sincerity as words only; such, indeed, as may, on some occasions, facilitate the practice of his art, but must never injure what is superior in his idea to all considerations, his own interest.

This sort of persons whom I now stigmatize, is skilled to assume the appearance of all virtues and all good qualities; but their favourite mask is universal benevolence. And the reason why they prefer this disguise to all others is, that it tends most effectually to conceal its opposite, which is, indeed, their true character, universal selfishness, or indifference to the happiness of all around them.

It is a maxim with them, that, as there is no individual who may not, in the vicissitudes of human affairs, have an opportunity of serving or injuring them, there is none whose favour they ought not to court. They are, therefore, universally and indiscriminately affable and obliging. So condescending are they, that one would almost imagine them to be totally exempt from pride; but after they have treated you with the most insinuating familiarity, should you happen to meet them in the company of your superiors, it is probable they will not know you; and, if you venture to accost them, will beg the favour of your name. When they have any boon to ask of you, or are accidentally in company where you happen to be the principal person, they admire, flatter, and show you all possible attention; but meet them soon afterwards at a public place of resort arm in arm with a lord, and they will pass close by and never see you. They either look straight forwards, or they are engaged in laughing at my lord's jest, or they really forget you. Whatever is the cause, their hats remain on their heads, and you endeavour

to catch their eye in vain. You then begin to see that these prodigiously agreeable, affable, clever, obliging gentlemen, are no more than mean, unprincipled, selfish sycophants and parasites.

If you were to judge of them by their dress, appearance, equipage, and conversation, you would imagine these agreeable men to be generous, as well as agreeable. But, in truth, their generosity extends only to themselves, and their expenses consist chiefly in providing matters of external ostentation. These they find conducive to the great end in view, which is to attract notice, and make advantageous connexions. After all their boasts, they are usually hard and extortionate in their bargains with the honest tradesmen who supply necessaries; they seldom hesitate at any mode of getting or saving money while it can be kept clandestine; and, though they are profuse at a watering-place, they are often contemptibly penurious among their poor neighbours, and remarkably frugal at their own tables. They play at cards, at which they are great adepts, and, therefore, prodigiously clever and agreeable men; but, though they declare the contrary, they play for gain rather than diversion. With all their vanity, love of show, love of pleasure, and love of dissipation, they are also most powerfully actuated by the love of money.

Self-regard, indeed, is evidently the principle of all their conduct. They appear in their own eyes of vast magnitude, and consider the rest of mankind as instruments, which they may manage, with a little cunning, so as to render them subservient to their own pleasure or their own profit. They do, indeed, too often succeed, and raise themselves to fortunes and reputation by deluding the simple and inconsiderate. They are, therefore, often admired as truly wise, and not unfrequently pointed out as models for imitation.

But I cannot help thinking, that, however they are

admired, and whatever success they may obtain, they are both despicable and unhappy. By servilely cringing to all, and especially to the great, without in the least attending to personal deserts and characters, they render themselves, in effect, absolute slaves, and their minds soon contract all the meanness and cowardice of slavery. Such meanness is certainly contemptible; nor can I conceive that such slavery, with any fortune or connexions whatever, can by any means be capable of manly enjoyment. Liberty, independence, and a consciousness of having acted uprightly, will render a state of indigence sweet, and the want of them must imbitter the envied blessings of rank and opulence. Providence has, indeed, so ordered it, for the sake of promoting the important ends of society, that they who live to self-interest and self-love, exclusively of all social regards, should be disappointed in their purposes. Immoderate selfishness, like all other greedy dispositions, sacrifices the present for that future enjoyment which never comes to mortal man. But the selfishness of the mere man of the world has this aggravation, that it leads to the neglect of some of the most amiable virtues, and sometimes to the commission of crimes of the blackest dye. So that the character I have delineated is incompatible with a good conscience; and without a good conscience what a phantom is all human bliss! After all the triumphs of worldly wisdom, and the contempt in which simplicity is held, I am convinced, that it is far better to be the deceived than the deceivers.

At the same time, it is certainly right to warn young men of the deceits of the world, and teach them not rashly to believe those characters the most excellent which appear the most specious and plausible. I would briefly advise them, whenever they see a man remarkably studious of external appearances, devoted

to the graces of dress and address, pretending great friendship and regard for persons he never saw before, promising liberally, perpetually smiling, and always agreeable—to beware of counterfeits, for such are abroad.

No. LVIII.

ON THE FAULTS AND BEAUTIES OF HOMER.

Criticism has been often employed in illustrating the beauties of authors who need not the illustration. The excellent productions of genius are immediately felt by all who possess sensibility. To those who do not, it is to little purpose that such elucidations are addressed. Writers who copy from nature will find admirers among those to whom nature has given the noble privilege of feeling all that is capable of affecting humanity, and will readily forego the attention of readers who must be taught by the instructions of art to understand those excellencies which were formed to be felt and tasted, loved and admired.

In reading Homer, every sensible mind feels itself animated with a warmth approaching to enthusiasm. A vivacity of expression, a sonorous language, an undescribable fire, the very essence of genius, rouse and gratify all the nobler affections of the human breast. A sweet simplicity at times calls forth the milder emotions of love and esteem, while the more elevated passages produce the just effect of real sublimity.

Such is the sympathetic glow which the reader acquires in the perusal of Homer, that he forgets those defects which are discoverable by a very small share of critical sagacity. The constant recurrence of the same epithets, and the repetition of the same lines, however they may be palliated by the undistinguishing partiality of editors and translators, are certainly faults. They proceeded from a carelessness, perhaps

an indolence, which, indeed, is easily pardoned in genius; but at the same time it must be remembered, that what admits of pardon must be blameable.

The illustrators of this mighty genius have incurred just ridicule in pointing out beauties never intended, and in refining even blemishes into becoming graces. It is a truth confirmed by daily experience, that an object which has once fixed the affection blinds the judgment. Thus it happens in common life; thus too in the arts. Horace was a man of a truly elegant taste, and no blind admirer. He has ventured to pronounce, that Homer sometimes nods; a truth which his bigoted readers are unwilling to allow. Homer's most tedious repetitions, and his coarsest language, are represented as the effects of that simplicity, which, when it is genuine, is allowed to be his characteristical excellence. But they are surely inadequate judges of the merit of compositions, who know not to discriminate between carelessness or rudeness and elegant simplicity.

From the reluctance which the admirers of Homer have always shown to confess the obvious faults of his productions, it might perhaps have been concluded, that his beauties were too few to admit the avowal of a partial deformity. Yet the truth is, that, with all his imperfections on his head, he deserves that admiration which has been lavishly paid to him by the general voice of mankind. His spots, like those of the sun, to use a common similitude, are lost in surrounding effulgence.

Every part of the Iliad glows with life; and none but such as are totally devoid of that genius with which it abounds can pause long enough to be disgusted with minuter defects, occasioned by an attention to beauties. Zoilus deserved his fate. He attended only to the defects of Homer; but his fate has

frightened succeeding critics, and induced them to deny the existence of defects in the poet whom they admired.

I repeat, that criticism is seldom so idly employed as when it is pointing out the beauties of a work of superior and acknowledged genius, like that of Homer. Such genius carries its own radiant light with it. It makes itself felt by its native force, and bears all before it by an irresistible momentum.

The experience of ages has proved, that the excellencies of Homer possess power over the human heart which might be almost called magical. His works have been wandering up and down the world during a longer period than those of any profane writer of equal authenticity. Yet are there no books which have come down to us with so little injury from the hand of time. Very few interpolations, and no chasms, are to be found in him. The cause of his coming down to us in a state so perfect, is indisputably, that he was always the object of general attention; that his verses were not only in the libraries, but in the hands, in the memories, and in the mouths of all who possessed a taste for poetry, and enjoyed leisure and opportunities for its gratification.

In what consists this irresistible charm of Homer's writing, this all-powerful influence? It is unquestionably a combination of all the fine qualities which genius can infuse; and among these, if I may venture to advance the opinion, the diction is not the least. The sound, in the style of Homer, is every where an echo to the sense; the pauses are varied with the nicest judgment, both for the purpose of impressing the idea more forcibly, and of touching the ear with that melody which, when duly produced, is capable of exciting in the mind the liveliest emotions. Milton has left all modern writers far behind him, in the

judicious variation of his pauses. Homer excels him and all others. To this unrivalled excellence of a judicious disposition of the pauses, Homer adds such an artful inversion of words, as immediately directs the attention, and fixes the accent on the most important or significant expression in the metrical period. He enjoyed the advantage of a magnificent language, still farther improved by commixture of the Ionic and all the other dialects of Greece. With such materials, and such skill, no wonder he has produced a work which all men of taste, who can read it with facility, read with rapture.

The beauties of language arise from two sources; the selection of words, and their collocation. Many writers have excelled in one of those beauties, and have been totally deficient in the other. Homer has most happily united them, and produced that powerful effect which must ever result from their judicious combination.

To enlarge on the excellencies of Homer, after the repeated illustrations and remarks of the most ingenious critics, seems superfluous. He has been the idol of kingdoms, the favourite of princes; and all antiquity has been unanimous in his praise. The moderns have, for the most part, fully entered into the feelings of the ancients, have acknowledged the justness of all the eulogia of Homer, and have added to the general acclamation. But though this be true, yet it is no less certain, that in these times, and in some countries on the Continent, an attention to Homer has been discouraged by those to whom fashion has given influence. His manners, his sentiments, his language, have been stigmatized by the admirers of French refinement, as coarse and vulgar. Chesterfield has called his language porter-like. The veneration in which he has ever been held is insolently attributed to that prejudice

by which superficial pretenders are disposed to account for all the best and most amiable notions which the world has long adopted in morals, in religion, and in literature.

It must not be deemed a judgment too severe, when we venture to suggest, that the modern Zoili often condemn that which they do not understand. It is probable that many of them have never read Homer but in their own languages. It is certain that some of the severest of them have read him only in those literal Latin interpretations which are usually subjoined in the common editions. From such poor representations they can scarcely have a juster idea of the great Mæonian than of the immense ocean from the view of a canal.

It is not to be doubted but that many who are disqualified for judging, both by the deficiency of their education and their idleness, frequently labour to bring into disrepute those studies, and those authors, with the nature and excellence of which they are totally unacquainted. By dint of effrontery and artifice they often succeed. But liberal scholars must wish, without any view to interest, that their attainments may be justly appreciated by their contemporaries, and will therefore exert themselves to counteract the disingenuous attempts of those who endeavour to lower them, and their pursuits, in the eyes of the injudicious and uninstructed.

No. LIX.

ON THE CELEBRATED HISTORIAN THUANUS, OR DE THOU.

The history composed by this illustrious writer includes a period of sixty-three years, beginning about the middle of the sixteenth century, and closing at the commencement of the seventeenth.

Though his life was active, for he was president of

the parliament of Paris, yet he found time and attention to write a very voluminous and circumstantial history. He adds to the number of those examples which tend to prove, that a contemplative is compatible with a busy life. Many of the most eminent writers have been engaged in public employments, have spent a great portion of their lives in voyages and travels undertaken on political affairs, and have only possessed that time for literary pursuits which they snatched from the anxious concerns of the cabinet and the field. Grotius, in an epistle to Thuanus, expresses a great degree of surprise, that the historian was able to compose such a work amidst a variety of public business. Thuanus might have expressed a reciprocal astonishment; for the very learned and voluminous Grotius was engaged in public life, and sent by the court of Sweden ambassador to France. The powers of the human mind are, indeed, capable of an extension beyond what it is easy to conceive; and he who is impelled by necessity to exert himself strenuously and steadily, will soon be surprised at his own advancement. In a life of action and public employment, a thousand incitements arise which the solitary student never feels. The love of praise, the fear of disgrace, the presence of witnesses, the glow excited by strenuous exertion, call forth all the latent energies of the soul, and stimulate it to achieve the most honourable undertakings. But diffidence, dejection of spirits, and habitual indolence, often preclude every efficient exertion of the sedentary student, who lives and dies in the recesses of a library.

The history of Thuanus excites a great share of respect immediately on entering on the perusal of it. The solemn declaration on which he calls God and men to witness, that he wrote his history for the glory of God, and the good of mankind, without resentment or partiality; the strong and repeated protestations

that truth is his only guide, warmly interest the reader in his favour, and open his mind for the reception of all that follows. The very serious prayer which closes the first book, displays a venerable appearance of sincerity and dignity; and there is every reason to believe, that it proceeded from a mind sincerely pious, and firmly resolved to propagate the truth, and the truth only, as far as human sagacity could develope it.

The style of Thuanus has always been admired for its perspicuity, except in its proper names. It is also, in its general tenour, truly elegant. It would have been uniformly beautiful, if the great author had given himself the trouble to express the materials which he received from others in his own diction. Perhaps it arose from modesty, and perhaps from indolence, that he inserted the recitals which he received from his correspondents, or extracted from books, nearly in the words in which he found them. That part of his history which relates to his own country is allowed to be the best. The cause is obvious. The matter and the words were entirely his own. But though the accounts which he received from others are in a style unequal to the compiler's, yet they are not barbarous. Fortunately, he wrote at a time when the Latin was cultivated by all the scholars in Europe with indefatigable diligence. In the *Mélanges d'Histoire de Literature,* which pass under the name of M. de Vigneul Marville, but which were written by D'Argonne, Thuanus is called the Livy of France; and the purity and eloquence of his style are said to place him on a level with the best historians of Rome. National partiality may, perhaps, lead an ingenious critic to exaggerate the praises of his countrymen; but it is certain, that if Thuanus does not equal, he approaches, in the excellence of his style, in dignity, and in copiousness, the best models of antiquity.

One circumstance has contributed to diminish the graces of his style, which he could not well avoid. Modern names of places and persons must abound in a work of this kind. But modern names have in general a barbarous sound in a work written in Latin. They are, in truth, scarcely tolerable. Thuanus was sensible of it, and has, therefore, latinized them. Yet they still retain something of their uncouth sound, and, what is worse, have so far affected the remarkable perspicuity of the work, as to have rendered it almost unintelligible to the greater part of its readers, without a perpetual glossary. Thuanus did right in latinizing the names, but he has taken too great liberties. He has totally disguised them. Who but an Œdipus could discern that Quodrigarius was the Latin name of Chartier, or Interamnas of Entragues? Desmarets is translated Paludanus; Dubois, Sylvius; le Sieur de Selves, Forestes. D'Argonne asserts, that our historian has rendered the proper name Joly by the Latin Lepidus; but the editors observe, that it is without foundation. The editors of the last fine edition have taken care to subjoin in the margin the modern names of persons and places with great fidelity; but still it is unpleasant to be often interrupted in the warmth of attention by recurring to a glossary.

All laudable predelictions have been carried too far. Thus the preference for the ancients, which is undoubtedly well founded, has led many modern writers, especially those who flourished at the revival of learning, to change their Gothic names into words which had some resemblance to Roman appellations, but which, at the same time, were neither Roman nor Gothic, and served only to disguise the owners under some barbarous combination of syllables with Latin terminations. The Gothicism of modern names is a great misfortune in the republic of letters: it consti-

tutes a base alloy, which corrupts and sullies the intrinsic beauties of an elegant Latin style. Nevertheless, I would advise all future writers to give the name of a place or person varied only in its termination, if varied at all; for the want of perspicuity is a defect which no elegance can compensate.

No. LX.

ON OWEN, THE LATIN EPIGRAMMATIST.

However absurd the taste of any age may be, writers of true genius will sometimes find means to render themselves conformable to it, and, at the same time, to claim the attention of a more enlightened period. Great ingenuity, though injudiciously and trivially employed, will ever excite the curiosity of readers who love to observe the operation of the human faculties under the influence of the various modes of judging and writing, which, at different periods, have prevailed in the world of letters.

In the age in which Joannes Audoenus, or John Owen, was born, the lower kinds of wit were universally relished. Puns, conceits, and a wretched species of epigrams, had totally superseded that unaffected mode of expression which nature dictates, and which cannot fail to please when nature is allowed to form her own judgment, unseduced by bad example and authority. Though the taste for epigrams was universal, unfortunately the general choice did not fall on Martial's manner as a model. Classical expression was little studied. Any words which conveyed the idea with tolerable precision, and which, in point of quantity, were admissible into an hexameter or pentameter verse, were sure of reception. It must, indeed, be owned, that a very scrupulous attention was not always paid even to quantity. Upon the whole, it is certain, that he who has formed himself upon classical models

will often be disgusted with the expressions of Owen and his coeval writers, at the same time that he is surprised and pleased by their wit and jocularity. He will find many thoughts which, in the management of a Martial, would have constituted epigrams of uncommon excellence, but which, like a fine portrait in modern drapery, have lost all freedom and grace by the Gothicism of their diction.

The epigrams of Owen are numerous, and nearly amount to two thousand. In such a number, it is to be concluded from experience that some will be good, others moderate, and the greater part of little or no merit. The great critic Rapin has said, that it is sufficient to have written one good epigram in the course of a life. His idea of a good epigram was, perhaps, too exalted. Owen has written many epigrams which please and satisfy the most judicious reader, and which, therefore, must be allowed to deserve the appellation of good. There is a great abundance of ingenious thoughts in every part of his little volume, and there is an ease of versification, acquired and confirmed by long habit, which, in some degree, conceals the defect of unclassical language. There are also a few epigrams, which are not defective in the beauties of style.

The epigrams of Owen were much read in his own and the succeeding age, and have, in the present times, afforded amusement to the polite scholar, though they have not met with general attention. The neglect with which they have been received is to be attributed to the contempt thrown upon epigrammatic wit by writers of distinguished taste, who, while they justly attempted to explode a false kind of witticism, consisting of puns and miserable conceits, involved this species of composition, which at that time had, indeed, greatly degenerated from its original grace, in a general and undeserved censure.

Inscriptions, for such are epigrams according to the

original meaning, are by no means in their own nature a contemptible species of composition. Prefixed to statues, public buildings, sepulchral monuments or books, and applied to great characters and on great occasions, they often reflect honour not only on their composers, but on nations and on princes. They are capable of the most elevated sublimity, as well as the most polished elegance of refined wit. From their conciseness and brevity they are easily comprehended and retained; and there are few scholars who have not committed to memory some favourite epigrams, which have struck them with their pointed wit and beauty. Yet, at the same time, I have observed, that it is not agreeable to read a great collection of epigrams with an unsuspended attention. The necessary want of connexion, and the continual efforts of wit, soon fatigue the mind, which, though, like the palate, it may occasionally delight in dainties, requires that its constant food should be plain and natural.

For the want of decency in some of Owen's compositions no apology can be offered. The taste of those readers must be gross, indeed, to whom indelicacy is humour, and obscenity wit. It may, however, be considered, that poets have at all times deemed themselves under an obligation to comply with the taste of their age, and that the age of Owen was not much refined. It was an heroic and a learned age; but it was not distinguished for delicacy.

The licentiousness of some of his works injured the poet's fortune; for Anthony Wood informs us, that Owen, distressed as he was by poverty, the epidemical disease of poets, was disappointed in the expectation of riches at the death of a wealthy uncle, who disinherited him for some of his poetry; a misfortune which several of the unthrifty followers of the muses have rashly incurred.

With all the faults of Owen, such has been the

sterility of epigrammatic genius in our country, that he may still retain the title, which he has acquired among foreigners, of the British Martial; but, as both he and Martial have disgraced epigrammatic composition by gross obscenity, they might both be thrown into the gulf of oblivion with very little detriment to letters and great advantage to morals. The selection of Martial's Epigrams for the use of schools, contains all that ought to be preserved of that abominable poetaster.

No. LXI.

ON POLITIAN AND MURETUS, TWO ELEGANT WRITERS OF MODERN LATIN. [IN A LETTER IN ANSWER TO INQUIRIES CONCERNING THEIR CHARACTERS]

ONE of the brightest luminaries which shone forth at the revival of learning was Politian. A slight knowledge of the Greek was in his age a great and rare attainment. He not only understood the language so as to read it, but to compose in it. As a grammarian, as an orator, as a poet, he has been an object of general admiration. Genius he undoubtedly possessed in a degree superior to the laborious scholars of his times; but his poetry is, notwithstanding, greatly defective. In fire he abounds; but he is wanting in judgment and in art. There are many fine lines in his Rusticus; and the diction is throughout remarkably splendid, though not always purely classical. The Latin poets of this period were not, indeed, so careful of the classical purity of their style as of harmony and brilliancy. Several of the poems of Politian are florid to excess, and far beyond that boundary which Augustan taste so finely delineates.

When we consider the state of literature at this early season, we must allow that great applause which has been paid to such writers as Politian justly due. They were under the necessity of breaking through a

thick cloud of ignorance; and they had to contend with the rude taste of their age before their writings could gain attention. Under every difficulty, they arrived, by the extraordinary efforts of emulation and genius, at a degree of excellence which greatly resembled that of the models selected by them for imitation.

The Greek verses which he wrote at a very early age are highly commended. He prefixed the age at which he wrote them. Scaliger says he need not have done this; for they are so excellent, that even his Latin verses, which he wrote when a man, are by no means equal to his juvenile compositions in the Greek language.

The Letters of Politian are indisputably elegant; but they are not without their faults. The style is sometimes too elevated and oratorical. For the sake of introducing a favourite phrase, he often goes too far out of his way, and overburthens the sense and the expression by a redundancy of words.

With all his faults, I must confess I have read him with great pleasure. There is a charm in true genius which compensates defects, and often conceals them.

Politian's real name was Bassus. The adoption of names entirely new, was, at one time, not uncommon. Thus the real name of Erasmus was Gerard. There was, perhaps, some degree of blameable ostentation in assuming the appellations of Desiderius and Erasmus, both of which, according to their respective etymology, signify the amiable or the desirable. Politian's adopted name was also chosen with a view to convey a favourable idea of his character. It is not improbable that it was thought to express, what, indeed, its derivation may intimate, a polished taste and understanding.

It is remarkable of Muretus, another elegant La-

tinist of modern ages, that he acquired a perfect knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages, in the latter of which he wrote most elegantly, without an instructor.

He composed various critical and poetical works; but his orations have always been celebrated as his best productions. They are, indeed, formed on the pattern of Cicero; they are written in a rapid and flowing style, and are not destitute of judicious observations. But, with respect to his diction, it must be said of him, that he is less careful in the selection than in the disposition of words. This defect arose from a blameable precipitation, of which authors have sometimes been vain.

We are told that Muretus never transcribed any of his writings; that he scarcely ever read his productions twice; that he seldom made a change or interpolation, and still less frequently a blot. This may account for his faults, but it cannot excuse them. It is an insult on mankind to present them with a work less perfect than the author might have rendered it. Haste and carelessness have often been avowed by writers who wished to exalt the general opinion of their abilities; but they have usually, and as they deserved, lost that lasting and undiminished reputation which they might have enjoyed. While an author lives, prejudice and party may support his fame; but when he is dead, these soon subside, and his real merit alone can preserve him from oblivion. Muretus has been justly and severely censured for having bestowed praises on the execrable massacre at Paris on St. Bartholomew's day.

He imitates Cicero; but, like a servile imitator, he imitates that which was least beautiful in his model. The very diffuse style of the Roman is still more diffuse in the orations of Muretus. The Asiatic

manner, even in its best state, is not agreeable to a correct taste. It prevented the works of the greatest orator whom the world ever saw from being universally admired; and, when it is presented to the reader with aggravated deformity, it can scarcely be rendered tolerable by any concomitant beauties.

The epistles of Muretus, though often elegant, are improperly written in the oratorical rather than in the epistolary style. He seems to have studied and admired the Orations of Cicero more than his Epistles.

Muretus has been greatly commended for his poetry. Scævola Sammarthanus says of him, that Catullus is not more like himself than he to Catullus. I have not been able to discover any peculiar grace, either of sentiment or style, in the few little poems which remain on sacred subjects. But there are several on other occasions which are very pleasing, and far surpass, in classical purity and in sentiment, most of the Latin compositions of the age of Muretus. In the very pretty epitaph on Raphael there is a manifest impropriety in representing the painter as praising himself in the highest style of commendation.

The verses entitled Tibur are pleasing. The prologue to Terence's Phormio is easy and elegant. The Institutio Puerilis was intended to be no more than useful. The whole collection will furnish entertainment to him who has formed a taste for modern as well as ancient Latin poetry. Catullus and Tibullus were evidently his patterns; but Rapin thinks, that by an excessive affectation of fine latinity, his odes are rendered stiff and unnatural.

It is true that there are many succeeding writers who have excelled Muretus both in verse and prose; but his real excellencies, and the great reputation he has possessed, will justly render him an object of attention to him who, from his love of letters, becomes inte-

rested in the works of all who have contributed to advance their progress.

No. LXII.

ON THE LATIN POET VIDA. [IN A LETTER IN ANSWER TO INQUIRIES CONCERNING HIS CHARACTER.]

VIDA was born at Cremona, a city in Italy, at no great distance from the birth-place of the poet whom he imitated. As a reward for his ingenious labours, the pope gave him the bishopric of Alba. He died at the age of fifty-nine, in the year 1566.

There is, perhaps, no modern Latin poet more celebrated than Vida. He is justly recorded by the great De Thou as one of the first among the Italians who applied poety to sacred subjects. He adds, that he adorned this province with pure and elegant verse. This praise is certainly due to him; but some of the more zealous religionists seem to have endeavoured to recommend his sacred poems as the best of his works. Even Scaliger, who censures his hymns as puerile, asserts that his Christiad deserves the highest praise. The truth is, that his Christiad is the worst of his greater works. He was sensible of it. He entered upon it with reluctance, and apologized for its defects with great diffidence, in an inscription subjoined to the poem. He speaks very modestly of his performance in his epistle to Botta, and seems desirous that his friends and all the world should know that he undertook so arduous a task solely with a view to show his gratitude in obeying his patrons. Besides many dull and heavy passages, which must occur to every reader, it is certain that the poem falls short of the dignity of its subject in almost every part. Among other faults, the critics have observed that Vida has put into the mouths of Joseph and St. John two speeches as long as those of Æneas to Dido, to be uttered while Jesus Christ

was conveyed to the tribunal of Pilate. It is not to be supposed, say they, that the president of the council could have time or patience, in the midst of a tumult, to attend to a long recital of all the particulars of the birth, education, and actions of our Saviour; besides that St. John is introduced explaining matters, of which himself could have no certain knowledge till after the day of Pentecost.

But it is not pleasant to dwell on the enumeration of defects. Almost every writer of genius has been sometimes led to compose against his inclination. The advice and importunity of friends, or the necessities of particular situations and emergencies, have called forth a task at a time when the fine impulses of genius have lain dormant. And it may be remarked, to the honour of Vida, that his most unpoetical works do credit to his heart and to his piety. This cannot be said of the trivial writings of many of our most celebrated authors, which have sometimes deviated not only into absurdity, but likewise into immorality.

Vida himself, were he alive, would probably choose his three books of Poetics, his Bombyces, and his Scacchia, to form the basis of his reputation. These certainly possess a portion of Virgilian beauty.—Though it is but a small portion, it diffuses a lustre which attracts and detains the notice of the classical reader. He undoubtedly practised the precept which he has given in his Poetics, of making Virgil the only object of imitation.

It is certainly of great consequence to the student who wishes to acquire the style of a particular author, not to distract his attention by the perusal of many others. Vida, though successful in his imitation, furnishes an additional proof how difficult it is for the moderns to contend with the ancients. He has many verses interspersed, which Virgil would not be

ashamed to own; but he does not support that dignified uniformity of elegance which places the Mantuan in a rank superior to all others in the excellence of correct, delicate, and dignified beauty. The first book contains many sweet passages; particularly agreeable is the description of the marks of a young genius, and its progress in poetical efforts. The whole performance is highly pleasing, contains many useful hints, and deserves the commendations of Pope in the art of criticism.

Modern eclogues in Latin have become too common to attract much notice when they are not remarkably excellent. They have been the trite medium of conveying the complaints of the surviving friend and the desponding lover; and have served also, by a most awkward contrivance, to communicate even political doctrines and ideas. Virgil, it is true, set the example; and it has been followed by Spenser, and many others, even to a degree of absurdity. Vida's Eclogues, as they are laborious imitations of Virgil's style, have a considerable share of grace and delicacy. The epistle to the celebrated Gibertus is full of tender sentiment, and exhibits that ease of language which proves it to have flowed from the heart.

The Bombyces of Vida, or the art of managing Silk-worms, has the same kind of merit, resulting from a close imitation of Virgil. It exhibits an equable flow of elegant verse, but, I think, presents not any striking passages; though Scaliger says it is the best of all Vida's works. It was a very proper present to a lady, the Marchioness of Mantua, to whom it is dedicated.

It is said, that, by reading the poem called Scacchia, or the Game of Chess, a person may learn to play it with skill. However that may be, the poem has always been admired for its ingenuity and elegance.

The game of chess, indeed, the most ancient and the most generally known of all others, deserves attention, were it merely on account of its antiquity and universal acceptance. Montaigne asserts, that it is too serious for a game; and it is certainly consistent with reason that games, which were adopted for recreation, should not require a degree of painful attention.

Vida's odes are pretty, but seem not to rise to any exalted degree of excellence. The Lamentation on the Death of his Parents, William Vida and Leona Oscasala, has many tender and affecting thoughts, which fully prove that it came from the heart. This, and a few other pathetic passages in his poems, evince that he would have excelled in elegiac poetry, if he had chosen to compose it.

Notwithstanding some trifling inequalities, and many dull passages, where genius seems to be eclipsed by labour, the whole collection does honour to the taste of the poet and his times. It is formed on the best models, and every where displays marks of an amiable disposition, as well as of a poetical and classical talent. It is always benevolent and friendly to virtue; or, as he says himself, his numbers please, if they please at all, without guilt, and without the bitterness of satire.

No. LXIII.

ON THE LATIN POET SANNAZARIUS. [IN A LETTER.]

About the time at which learning arose, as it were, from the dead, there appeared an illustrious race of writers in Latin verse, whose forte of genius, and elegance of language, entitle them to rank among the most celebrated of modern poets, with our Drydens, Priors, Popes, and Parnells.

Parnell, indeed, it is well known, borrowed several of his pieces from the modern Latin poets; and Pope is

justly thought to have improved himself by the perusal of them. Pope was so great an admirer of the Italian writers, who had chiefly excelled in Latin poetry, that he published a selection of their detached pieces, in two volumes. There happened, at that time, to prevail a prejudice against modern Latin poetry, occasioned by a capricious censure of it by Boileau, and therefore these volumes were not greatly regarded: but we may readily believe, that a selection conducted by the taste of Pope could not but abound in beauty. His two volumes were, indeed, but an amplification of a small edition published by an anonymous, but very judicious, compiler; and Pope is blamed by a sensible though severe remarker on his life, for omitting the original preface. Its omission is certainly a blemish in Pope's edition of the "Selecta Poemata Italorum." The preface of the anonymous editor is, indeed, equally remarkable for its modesty and taste; and I conjecture it to have been the production of some Cambridge student; as the book, though printed in London, was printed at the expense of Cambridge booksellers. The editor makes very short, yet judicious remarks on the several poets who compose his collection, particularly on Sannazarius, Fracastorius, Vida, Politian, and Castiglione. He has placed Sannazarius first in the collection; a rank to which the poet is entitled by his superior merit.

Sannazarius was born at Naples, in the fifteenth century. His singular learning and amiable morals soon introduced him to the court, where, though he was caressed and advanced, he was not allured from polite letters by the temptations either of ambition or of pleasure. He made poetry the elegant employment of his liberal leisure, and, amidst the business and dissipation of a court, produced his admired poem, De Partu Virginis.

This poem is said to have employed its elegant writer no less than twenty years in adding the last polish and improvement. He was one of those writers of exquisite taste who can seldom satisfy their own ideas of excellence. Indeed, I believe, few fine writers please themselves; for they who reach one great height of excellence see their horizon extended as they rise, and consider the ascent which they have already gained as an humble eminence, compared to summits which seem to ascend in perpetual progression, and to elude their most laborious endeavours. Apelles used to say, that Protogenes knew not when to take his hand from the tablet which he was painting; and the same has been said of this artist in a sister art.

Of this poem, though the admirers have been warm and numerous, there have been censurers, whose opinions seem to be just. The style is beautiful, and Virgilian; but the spirit is not always equal to the style. Erasmus acknowledges that he read the poem with pleasure; but at the same time laments, that a sacred subject was not treated more consistently with our ideas of sanctity. Rapin allows that the purity of the style is admirable; but he asserts, that the fable of the piece is destitute of delicacy, and that the manner is by no means adequate to the dignity of the subject. It has also been thought a just cause of reprehension, that, in a sacred poem, he has never mentioned the names of Jesus or of Christ. He was afraid that such names might disgust an ear accustomed to the majestic sounds of the Latin language, and of Virgilian verse. When he is introducing the prophecies which foretold Jesus Christ, he is ashamed to use the names Isaiah and David, but most ridiculously introduces Proteus singing them in a cave on the banks of the river Jordan.

Sannazarius, indeed, affords an instance, among

many others, how difficult it is to succeed in sacred poetry. The poem De Partu Virginis, like the Christiad of Vida, is, notwithstanding the beauties of diction, the worst production of its author. It is the business of poetry to raise things from the low level of reality to all the elevation which fancy and language can bestow; but divine subjects are already so far raised above nature, as not to admit of much poetical exaltation. The attempt has always, except in a few instances, discovered only the impotence and ambition of man. It is like an attempt to put Ossa on Pelion, in order to invade the skies. A very judicious critic has shown, in some of his prefaces to the English poets, that sacred poetry, when uninspired, can seldom reach exalted excellence.

The most popular of the poems of Sannazarius are his Piscatory Eclogues. Like Pope's pastorals, they were juvenile compositions; and, like them, they may be produced as proofs, that improvement does not always keep pace with progressive years. There is a happiness in native genius, which is sometimes lost, rather than improved, with increasing judgment and experience.

Piscatory eclogues have been attempted by several writers; but they have not been successful. It is, indeed, easy to conjecture why they have not succeeded. Even pastoral poetry is so far removed from reality and nature, that there seems to be little relish remaining among mankind for new works of that species. But we all know, that the manners of those who are engaged in fishing as a trade are even coarser than those of the modern shepherd. To put the elegant language of the Mantuan muse into the mouths of the crew of a fishing-smack, is such a violation of truth and nature, as tends to excite ridicule by its incongruity.

The charms, however, of fine language and melo-

dious verse can almost reconcile us to absurdity of design; and these charms are very conspicuous and captivating in the Eclogues of Sannazarius. Rapin has bestowed great praise upon them; and Scaliger asserts, that they are the only Latin poems of this kind which, after Virgil, are worth perusal. They have, indeed, a very considerable portion of that sweet Virgilian grace which has been so happily characterized in the epithets *molle et facetum*, the tender and the highly finished. It is one of the distinguished excellencies of this poet, that he has, on all occasions, used the file with great delicacy and attention.

The elegies of Sannazarius are admired for their ease and harmony; and his epigrams have also held a high place among the compositions of modern latinists. It is not consistent with the design of my papers to introduce long citations in the learned languages; and, therefore, I must refer the classical reader to the poems themselves, which are frequently to be found in collections, if not in separate volumes.

I trust, however, I shall want no apology for inserting the following passage relative to Sannazarius, which I have accidentally fallen upon in a critic of our own times of no small reputation.

"I can by no means," says the late philosopher of Salisbury, "omit Sannazarius, whose Eclogues in particular, formed on the plan of a fishing life instead of pastoral, cannot be enough admired both for their latinity and their sentiment. His fourth eclogue, called Proteus, written in imitation of Virgil's eclogue called Silenus, may be justly valued as a master-piece in its kind."

The critic quotes several verses of this piece, and points out peculiar beauties. In a subsequent page, he cites several most beautiful passages from other poems, descriptive of the villa of Sannazarius, at Mergillina.

"It would be difficult," he concludes, "to translate these elegant morsels. It is sufficient to express what they mean collectively—that the village of Mergillina had solitary woods; had groves of laurel and citron; had grottoes in the rock, with rivulets and springs; and that, from its lofty situation, it looked down upon the sea, and commanded an extensive prospect.

"It is no wonder that such a villa should enamour such an owner. So strong was his affection for it, that when, during the subsequent wars in Italy, it was demolished by the Imperial troops, this unfortunate event was supposed to have hastened his end."

He was buried near this delightful spot, the scene of his elegant enjoyments, and near the sweet poet of Mantua, the constant object of his successful imitation. An epitaph was engraved on his tomb, written by Bembo, and expressive of a wish that flowers might arise from the sacred ashes; for that there reposed Sannazarius, next in place as next in genius to Virgil.

I will venture to recommend this poet, and many others of the moderns, to the young or classical scholar; but, at the same time, it is necessary to add a caution:—let original writers be first read; nor let others be attended to till the taste is refined, and the judgment corroborated by the actual contemplation of the finished pieces of the Augustan age. Let Virgil be read almost to satiety before the attention is diverted to the inferior Latin poets of modern times. Many a fine genius has been checked in its career by a too early perusal of writers, who, with all their elegance, are still subordinate, and who frequently are no more than imitators of imitators, a SERVUM PECUS, as Horace justly calls them. When the taste and judgment are once rightly established, they may be finely exercised by sometimes contemplating copies as well as originals. Nor let any student fear to sip at those fountains from

which several of our best English poets, Pope in particular, drank most copiously.

No. LXIV.

ON THE VENERABLE BEDE, AND SEVERAL OTHE EARLY WRITERS OF ENGLAND.

I CANNOT help considering those writers who arrived at distinguished eminence in a dark age as the heroes of literature. In later times, and indeed at present, there are various and powerful incitements to literary ambition. A competent education is become general. Books are easily procured, readers abound, and reputation and gain are the usual effects of remarkable improvement. But to have written much and successfully in the seventh century, is a proof of heroic ardour and undaunted perseverance, such as was not to be cooled by neglect, nor obstructed by difficulty. Books, which must always supply the materials for writing, were at that time difficult to be procured; and after they were procured, and the compositions to which they gave occasion completed, few were capable of reading them, or of bestowing on them that approbation which they justly deserved. It is, indeed, difficult to form an adequate idea of the strength and resolution which, amidst all these discouragements, could confine a student of that period, under so many disadvantages, to the labour of writing, and enable him to succeed in it to the admiration of distant ages.

The venerable Bede stands forth a very illustrious example of piety and literary application. He was born about the middle of the seventh century, at Jarrow, at the mouth of the Tyne, and was early devoted to a monastic life. He confined himself to his solitary cell; and, though he was invited to Italy by the pope, preferred the sweets of liberty and of an unambitious life, which he spent in a regular alternation of prayers and study.

In the third volume of his History, he says of himself, "When I was seven years old, I was given up by my relations to the very respectable Abbot Benedict, and then to Ceolfred, to be educated by them; and, passing my whole life in the same monastery, I employed myself entirely in meditating on the Scriptures; and amidst the observance of a strict discipline, and the daily business of chanting in the church, I constantly found, in the exercises of learning, of teaching, and of writing, a sweet amusement.

His great work was an Ecclesiastical History; but his miscellaneous productions are almost incredibly numerous. He is said to have been skilled in Greek as well as in Latin; and he distinguished himself by his knowledge in poetry, rhetoric, general history, astronomy, arithmetic, chronology, philosophy, and theology. So great was his character as a theologist, that his homilies were appointed to be read in churches, even while he was alive, by the express order of the bishops. To this circumstance he probably owes the title of Venerable; for, as he was alive, he could not easily be made a saint, and therefore was honoured with an intermediate but most respectable epithet; an epithet significant of the sanctity of his character, which was no less strikingly marked by warmth and sincerity of devotion than by profound erudition.

Bede has not affected elegance of style; but he is not altogether inelegant. He is perspicuous, if he is not pure; and concise and easy, if not full and harmonious. Though he is said to have drawn his learning from the Greek and Latin authors, yet he seems to have attended more to their matter than their manner. He is credulous, and relates the foolish stories of an uncultivated age, as if they were true history. He undoubtedly has some faults of his age, and has been severely

censured for them by Du Pin, D'Argonne, and Milton; but he has been extolled and admired by those whose names, both in number and weight, will be more than equivalent to his detractors; and, take him for all in all, as Shakespeare says, he is one of the most brilliant ornaments of early English literature. His Ecclesiastical History, in five books, was published in the last century at Cambridge, with the Saxon paraphrase of Alfred the Great. His various other works, a catalogue of which would exceed the limits of my paper, are scattered throughout all the most ancient and valuable libraries in the kingdom. Considering the improvements which have been made in the space of a thousand years, they may not probably be very useful, but they are striking and curious examples of early learning and application, under great disadvantages.

Alcuin was the scholar of Bede and reflects honour on his master. His learning was deep and extensive. He wrote not fewer than fifty treatises on important subjects, and in a style, which, in his age, was not inelegant. He had the singular honour of introducing polite literature into France, whither he was invited by the king, by promoting the establishment of the university of Paris. He is said also to have founded a school at Tours, where he presided as the master; and he refused to leave his employment and institution at the urgent invitation of the emperor Charlemagne.

Joannes Scotus Erigena became a very distinguished scholar in the eighth century. He was most probably a native of Scotland, though England and Ireland have put in their claims to the honour of his birth. He wrote many treatises: but his principal work was his five books on the Division of Nature, printed in the last century at Oxford. He also, like Alcuin, was invited to France by Francis the Bald, with whom he

lived on terms of intimate friendship, and even familiarity. Some of his writings were thought rather injurious to the Roman Catholic religion; and, at the instigation of the pope, he was driven from Paris to his native country. On his return he was assassinated by the monks of Malmsbury, who stabbed him with penknives in revenge for the freedom with which he had ventured to reprehend them. Our countryman, John Bale, relates a circumstance which tends to render this old author remarkable. He tells us that he was the first professor in Oxford, and was appointed to his office by Alfred himself, immediately after that great king had begun the establishment of this famous university.

But I mean not to invade the province of the biographer, nor to engage in literary history beyond the limits which are usually assigned to my circumscribed papers. I have entered on this subject with a view to amuse the young student, and to rouse his diligence by examples of uncommon application and success, under circumstances the most unfavourable. I shall, perhaps, occasionally resume it. I have always taken a particular pleasure in reading anecdotes of the learned: and I cannot help thinking it a pleasure necessarily connected with improvement; for we can scarcely read the accounts of them transmitted to us by critics and biographers, without admiring the many instances of virtue and genius which occur under very unfavourable circumstances, and we insensibly learn to imitate what we habitually admire. As in the arts of painting and sculpture, the best method of facilitating the progress of the artist is to place the finest models constantly in his view, so also in life and in letters it is of the highest importance to point out patterns of that actual excellence which, in our precepts and exhortations, we have previously recommended. There is no method so successful of displaying the blemishes to be

avoided, and the beauties and excellencies which ought to be the objects of pursuit.

No. LXV.

ON SOME OF THE MOST CELEBRATED SCHOOLMEN.

EVERY lover of letters will find himself impelled, by curiosity, to inquire into the lives and writings of those scholars who, in any period of literature, have arrived at distinguished reputation. Few have been viewed with greater admiration by the age in which they flourished than the professors of scholastic theology. Scarcely any epithet which language afforded was thought adequate to their exalted merit.

Thomas d'Aquin, or, as he is commonly called, Thomas Aquinas, the angelic doctor, was born at Naples, in the beginning of the thirteenth century. He was early devoted to philosophy and theology; and one of his masters is said to have been a countryman of our own, Alexander ab Ales, the father of the schoolmen, and a *doctor irrefragabilis*. After a virtuous and laborious life spent in an unremitted attention to learning, he died at the age of fifty. He was canonized in 1323, and has been read and admired for ages among a species of congenial scholars, who, in a very peculiar and unfashionable kind of learning, have displayed an astonishing depth and acuteness of intellect. He founded the sect of the Thomists.

Thomas Aquinas stands without a rival at the head of the scholastic theologians. He is called by the Roman catholics the Homer of their theological writers; and, as a philosopher, he acquired uncommon glory by his Comments on Aristotle, whose works held a place in the esteem of the times at least equal to the Bible. "Nor was he," says Erasmus, "great only in his own age. He exhibited a constancy of application, a soundness of understanding, and a solidity of erudition, which

scarcely any of the modern divines have equalled. He has made so excellent an use of the learning then in vogue, that one cannot help lamenting that he enjoyed not the advantages of the learned languages, and the other materials of politer literature." Had Aquinas been born two centuries later, there is scarcely any work which we might not have expected, in polite and solid literature, from such activity, combined with force, subtilty, and penetration unrivalled.

His works, together with his life, and the notes of the editors, make up no less than eighteen volumes in folio, and they were printed in 1594, at Venice.

Thomas Aquinas has been introduced to the notice of the English reader by an anecdote in the Life of Young, in which it is recorded that, when Young applied to Pope for advice in the choice of books on first entering on the study of divinity, Pope recommended Thomas Aquinas. This is generally understood to have been no more than a joke; but, if Pope had been a zealous Catholic, it might have been probable that he took this artful method of making Young a convert to popery. The simplicity and enthusiasm of Young rendered him an easy dupe to jesuitical zeal and artifice. But, I believe, Pope was too much attached to poetry to be a bigot to any system of religion. After all, it is true that a great deal of sound divinity is to be learned even by Protestants from Thomas Aquinas.

It appears from a passage in the works of Young that he read enough of Aquinas, and of similar writers, to have formed a very exalted idea of their merit. "For," says he, "the minds of the schoolmen were almost as much cloistered as their bodies; they had but little learning, and few books; yet may the most learned be struck with some astonishment at their so singular natural sagacity and most exquisite edge of

thought. Who could expect to find Pindar and Scotus, Shakespeare and Aquinas, of the same party? Both equally show an original, unindebted energy; the *vigor igneus* and *cœlestis origo* burn in both, and leave us in doubt whether genius is more evident in the sublime flights and beauteous flowers of poetry, or in the profound penetration and marvellous, keen, and minute distinctions called the thorns of the schools."

It is said, that the great logician, Bishop Sanderson, was particularly fond of the *Secunda Secundæ* of Aquinas, and that he used constantly to carry with him this treatise, together with Aristotle's Rhetoric and Tully's Offices. A book so much read and esteemed by so great a man, and associated with the works of Cicero and Aristotle, must have no inconsiderable merit.

Joannes Duns, who derived his *cognomen*, or additional name of Scotus, from his native country, was not much posterior to Aquinas in time or in glory.—He was the scholar of William Varro, an Englishman. The epithet of subtile was allotted to him, according to the fashion of the times, which bestowed a title on all the more eminent schoolmen. The subtilty of his genius gave him, indeed, an incontrovertible claim to the title. Nothing, it is said of him, was so dark, but he was able to enlighten it; nothing so enigmatic, but, like another Œdipus, he was able to resolve it. But, alas! he carried his subtilty too far. The thread was spun so fine, that it became at last invisible. Many terms were used by him, as they were, indeed, by all the schoolmen, which, if they conveyed any idea to himself are yet too recondite to enlighten less subtile readers. Who is able to explain his hæccities, his intrinsic modes, and his insolubles? And yet these are terms used to explain other books, and particularly the Scriptures. Bale, severely censures

such theology. He calls this jargon of terms the chimeras of the sophists; and justly observes, that the Roman catholic religion, dressed out in these forms, appears more foolish than the fabulous theology of Hesiod and Orpheus.

"Joannes Duns Scotus," says his panegyrist Lansius, "was learned to a miracle in logic, and in the thorny paths of divinity. He founded the sect of the Scotists, which was opposed to the Thomists. He was greater than Homer in one respect, since not only cities but kingdoms contended for the honour of his birth. The English, the Irish, the Scotch, the French, and the Italians, have claimed him as their own."

He was, however, unfortunate in his end: we are told, but I know not whether much credit is due to the story, that being seized with an apoplexy, and supposed to be dead, he was buried too soon; and, reviving in the vault, called in vain for assistance, and died before he could be released.

The learning of the modern ages is very different from the learning of poor Duns; and no kingdom will now contend with Scotland for the honour of producing this subtile doctor. His diligence and sagacity are, however, truly admirable. His works consist of twelve volumes in folio, which were published in the last century, at Lyons. Though none, indeed, will now read them, yet they ought to be preserved, as very curious monuments of a peculiar learning and genius, and of indefatigable industry.

Remond Lulle, or, as he is called in Latin, Raymondus Lullus, flourished about the year 1300, nearly at the same time with Duns Scotus. He was born in Majorca, and has long been the boast of the Spaniards. His pretensions and reputation were very high, and he became distinguished by the title of Doctor Illuminatus.

He is said to have spent his youth in profligacy, and not to have been reformed till the age of forty; but he then engaged in the conversion of the Saracens, and, after having suffered much ill-treatment, was at last stoned to death. He was, therefore, of course, worshipped by the people of Arragon as a martyr. He was probably soon deposed from this elevation; for there arose a party who maintained that he had been instructed in all he knew by that scientific preceptor, the devil.

In consequence of his intercourse with the Arabians, he acquired a knowledge of medicine, natural philosophy, and astronomy. From all these combined, he deduced a science of his own, as he represented it in Spain and Italy—that of chemistry and alchemy. An old writer, Robertus Constantinus, asserts that he had seen, in the Tower of London, a piece of pure gold made by the alchemical art of Raymondus Lullus.

He is said to have written more than four thousand treatises in philosophy, medicine, and theology. He founded a sect of Lullists, and was the inventor of a certain method, which our great Lord Bacon reprobates as useless and ostentatious. It tended to teach the terms of art only, as if he who knows the words were sure to comprehend the art itself. Rapin also censures it as a method which has no solidity, and which, so far from making men learned, does not even suppose them reasonable.

He gave his logical work the pompous title of the Great Art; and he engaged that, by its assistance, any man, however ignorant, should acquire the whole circle of the sciences in three months. This work was to be accomplished by means of various diagrams, circular and triangular, and by the letters of the alphabet mysteriously transposed. He had, however, his admirers and followers; but his great art has been found

of so little use to mankind, that the mode of its operation is unknown. They who are curious and idle, may find some account of it in Gassendus, Alstedius, and Keckermannus; but I advise them to spend their leisure better than in the research.

Lullus is not, indeed, esteemed for any real improvement in knowledge or sound learning. He threw a veil of obscurity over his writings, which has often served as a cloak of ignorance. It is not surprising that an alchemist should affect the darkness and enigmatic air of a magician. In an age of profound ignorance, the less he was understood, the more he was admired.

Considering the disadvantages under which the celebrated schoolmen laboured, and the multitude and profundity of their works, many of them exhibit very stupendous and animating examples of human industry. I have, indeed, collected these few observations on them with a view to encourage the young student to diligence, by suggesting to him what great works the human intellect is capable of performing in the short period of a life; and at the same time to deter him from wasting the force of his genius in subjects uselessly abstruse, or in any modes of exertion which are not likely to become long and extensively advantageous to his fellow-creatures.

No. LXVI.

ON THE VALUE OF AN HONEST MAN.

It is the folly and misfortune of human nature to prefer the present to the future, the agreeable to the useful, the shining to the solid. We admire wit, beauty, station, wealth, titles, and all that sparkles with the brilliancy of external lustre; and though we probably approve the plain and homely virtues which form the foundation of all real excellence, it is with the cold

feelings of unimpassioned judgment. But in youth, when our choice in life is usually fixed, we are much more disposed to pursue what we admire than what we only approve; and the consequence is, that the greater number form the earliest and most durable attachments to vanity. Sober maxims, rules of prudence, dictates of justice, plain truth, simplicity of manners, constancy in friendship, and regularity in business, appear with few charms in the eyes of him who pants for the noble distinctions of being remarked at public places for elegance of dress, admired for the most splendid vehicle, celebrated for his wit at a masquerade, smiled upon at court, and at length, perhaps, rewarded with a mitre, a title, a riband, and a star. To obtain such bliss, far other qualifications are necessary than the antiquated virtues of one's grandfather. The business must be done by dress, address, knowledge of the world, and, in short, the graces, the graces, the graces! With respect to honesty, I have somewhere read, that a man of honour, on hearing honesty attributed to his fashionable friend, expressed some degree of displeasure at the panegyric, and declared, that such a compliment was only fit for his footman. Our first question concerning a gentleman whose character we wish to learn, is seldom, Is he honest? but, Is he rich? Is he a man of fashion, spirit, ton, or a bon vivant? Has he tact?

Now there have been of late, and indeed at all times, many men of fashion totally destitute of moral honesty. They have possessed every personal grace, and every pleasing accomplishment. They could sing, dance, and play on musical instruments. They could converse with the grave and the gay, and adapt all their sentiments to the present company. They had that freedom which is called charming, and which enabled them to push themselves into all companies, and accost

men of rank and character by their surnames, and without any respectful addition. All this could not fail to excite the praise of the ladies, and the envy of the gentlemen. But in the end it has been, in several notorious instances, found that these charming men, with the appearance of whatever is good and agreeable, have been the first to overreach in a bargain, and exceedingly successful in defrauding their creditors.

So despicable and detestable do the characters of such men appear on detection, that I cannot help thinking honesty is the best ornament, as well as the best policy. It is, indeed, a diamond of the first water; while all the showy, dazzling, unsubstantial qualities which the artful assume for the purposes of deceit, are no more than French paste, or paltry glass, at once both tawdry, brittle, and vile.

I would recommend unfeigned honesty as ornamental; because such is the present state of manners, it is infinitely more likely to be pursued and valued by the majority of mankind, when they think it will conciliate the love and admiration of each other, than when they view it merely as a moral excellence. The man of reading, reflection, and a cultivated mind, will want no motives to pursue it but those which are suggested by his own conscience and the delicacy of his sentiments. But to the mass of mankind, composed of all ages, all ranks, all tempers, all professions, all parties, and all religions, it is necessary to render any particular virtue which the moralist wishes to promote, both lovely and honourable. Interest, passion, and fancy, must be taught, if possible, to second the decisions of reason. She is too often deposed by her refractory subjects, whose obedience, indeed, is seldom to be relied on, but when it is in some degree spontaneous.

It cannot surely be denied, that the quality which

may justly be extended to the imitation of animals, and the placid scenery of still life. All these are found to please the imagination, but not to elevate the mind. They inspire a complacency, but do not warm with sentiment, or animate to virtue. To touch the heart with sympathy, to excite the nobler affections, and to give a masculine pleasure, man must be the object of imitation; the sentiments and passion of the human bosom must speak in the features and attitudes of the canvass or the marble. That general connexion which subsists between all who partake of humanity, causes a general concern in the interests of each individual. Man, indeed, views the actions and passions of men with all the solicitude of one concerned in the event, but looks down upon the lower part of the creation with the dispassionate curiosity of a disinteresed spectator.

To represent the attitudes and features of his actions and his passions, is the principal business of Sculpture; and though a considerable degree of its excellence depends on the delicacy of manual execution, yet has it ever maintained a distinguished place among the arts which require exquisite sensibility, and a fine imagination. Nature, indeed, lies open to the inspection of the learned and of the unlearned, of the stupid and of the ingenious; but the man of fine feeling, and of elegant taste, can alone perceive and imitate her more delicate traits, her more captivating, though less obvious, allurements.

The first productions of sculpture probably owe their origin to religion. Too gross to conceive immaterial ideas of the Deity, the multitude wanted some sensible object to fix their attention and excite their enthusiasm. Thus He, whose temple is all space, and whose altar the universe, was confined in his residence to some rude image shapen by the hand of idolatry: but, how-

ever derogatory from the dignity of the Supreme Being, or inconsistent with the reason of man, the practice has been particularly favourable to the arts of imitation. The statue that was formed as an object of religious adoration has, indeed, failed in its original purpose; but it has been viewed with a degree of wonder scarcely less ardent than devotion.

And, indeed, it is to be presumed, that few will wish that degree of idolatrous attention which is at present paid to the statues of the ancient deities forbidden; for whenever the productions of the fine arts shall cease to be admired, they will cease to be imitated. Such an event every friend to just taste will deprecate, since to renounce the models of the ancients is to renounce the most captivating embellishment of art, an adherence to simplicity and nature. While a *Venus de Medicis*, and an *Apollo Belvidere*, shall continue to be standards of excellence, no one can with reason apprehend lest the chaste graces of real elgance should be sacrificed to false glare and superfluous ornament.

To do justice to the remains of antiquity by description, requires a pen as masterly as the artist's chisel. A Virgil should exhibit the ideas of Praxiteles. A professor of the art may, perhaps, find technical terms adequate to a technical description. He may expatiate on proportion, and dictate rules for forming a judgment; but the language of an artist can seldom be completely understood but by artists, and the feelings of the spectator, duly informed, are the best criterion of excellence in the arts of painting and sculpture.

Comparisons are frequently made between the respective beauty, the value, and the utility of the several arts. One of the best judges of antiquity has asserted, in a well-known passage of his works, that all the arts which tend to polish and refine human nature are united by a common bond. That painting, poetry,

and sculpture, nearly approximate to each other, is obvious on the slightest review. They have constantly reflected images on each other, and joining like the Graces, hand in hand, have, from the union of their force, commanded in all ages universal admiration. If the Mantuan muse drew her most beautiful pictures from the originals of sculpture, to the muse of Homer, on the other hand, has sculpture been indebted for her master-piece. The sublime idea of a Being who shook the heavens with his nod, existed originally in the poet's mind. The artist, however, embodied the ideal form, and may be said to have wanted only Promethean aid to have realized the creature of imagination. The marble form has been transferred to canvass, and the representation of the tablet to the marble, with equal applause both to the arts and to the professors: and though some have essayed to ascertain the superiority of one or other of these sister arts, yet, as it is invidious to give a distinguished preference to either, when each endeavours to exalt the other, it may be more candid to assert with Horace, on a similar occasion, that they equally require and communicate mutual assistance with all the benignity of disinterested friendship.

Sculpture is not, any more than the other arts, confined to imitations of the human form. Subordinate to statuary are many other operations of the chisel, which require, in the highest degree, both ingenuity of design and skill in execution. The marble urn and the sepulchral monument have ever been the chief ornaments of mansions dedicated to the Deity. The palaces of princes have derived less splendour from the profusion of finery, and the glittering of magnificence, than from the foliage of the Corinthian capital, and the elegant wreaths of the festoon; and though the modern invention of multiplying the works of the artists by devices which require no ingenuity, has prostituted the

ornaments of a temple to the gaudiness of a suburban villa, and the decoration of a palace to the embellishment of a tradesman's door-post, yet must not he whose hand formed the original vase, or sculptured the storied urn, lose that praise which is ever due to the inventive artist, the man of original genius and of native taste.

It belongs to sculpture, as well as to painting, not only to represent single figures, but to combine them in a group. The relievo is a marble picture: though it wants those graces of the canvass which result from a due mixture of light and shade, and from a variety of colours, yet it possesses some advantages which may ultimately compensate the defect, and even give it a superiority over the picture. Exposure to the weather, the commonest accidents, and the insensible depredations of time, soon destroy the comparatively transient productions of the pencil; but the marble tablet defies the corroding tooth of ages, and may survive even a deluge. There remains not a single painting of Parrhasius or Apelles, of Timanthes or Protagoras, by which we can judge of the justice of those praises so lavishly bestowed on them by Pliny, Quintilian, and Lucian; but many ancient relievos continue to the present day in all their original perfection.

Sculpture displays peculiar grace and excellence when it condescends to work in miniature. The gem, however precious and beautiful, receives additional value, and more attractive beauty, from the hand of the artist. The features of the hero and philosopher, when marked on the stone whose cohesion is like that of adamant, are transmitted to the latest ages unhurt by accidents, and unimpaired by time. Thus is the votary of learning enabled to behold the countenances of those whose achievements astonish, whose writings charm, and whose precepts improve him; and, after

the lapse of some thousand years, to indulge the natural desire of viewing the real aspect of men who shone in the field and in the cabinet, or who dignified the portico or the academy. When all other sources of information have failed, the figure on the gem has often illustrated beauties and cleared obscurities in the classics and the historians. Of these smaller productions of the sculptor, the ingenuity of invention, stimulated by the hopes of gain, has found means to multiply copies without number: but though the copies should lessen the pecuniary value, they cannot diminish the intrinsic merit of the originals.

That species of sculpture which is distinguished by the specific appellation of engraving on copper, was totally unknown to the ancients. By the co-operation of this sister art, the productions of painting are universally diffused, and the ornament received in the gallery of an individual becomes the embellishment of every habitation. However great its uses, and exalted its perfection, it must be confessed, by every impartial observer, to owe a great degree of its advancement to the artists of our own country; and it were easy to enumerate some works of English engravers, of which the justness of representation, and the delicacy of execution, have not been surpassed by any age or in any climate.

No. LXVIII.

THAT THE ENGLISH POSSESS A FINE TASTE FOR SCULPTURE, AND THAT IT OUGHT TO BE ENCOURAGED FOR ITS MORAL EFFECTS.

THERE are some, who, with a spirit too confined for the liberality of philosophy, have excluded from all pretensions to refined taste that part of mankind which nature has placed in the northern regions. This faculty has been limited to those happier mortals who inhale the balmy breezes of the warmer climates. That these

arts have been most successfully cultivated in the warmer regions of Europe, cannot be denied; but let it not be said, that any of the faculties of the free-born mind are local. Nor let it be hastily concluded, that the English, who are classed by these philosophers among the northern savages, but who are known to possess the mental powers in a state of vigour equal at least to the rest of the world, are destitute of taste, of that faculty which adds a grace to the exertions of all others, and without which the strongest efforts of the mind have an appearance of illiberality. If it was late before our artists made any considerable proficiency in sculpture, it must not be immediately inferred that they were incapable of excellence; but that, as is incontestibly true, they did not attempt it. To expect that the art should attain perfection before it is an object of national attention, is no less unreasonable than to require the fruit in maturity before the summer's sun has shone upon the tree.

The sunshine of royal or popular patronage can baffle the rigours of the climate, and raise luxuriant vegetation on the bleakest mountain. Rewarded by a prince, and encouraged by a people, it is not to be wondered that sculpture has among us made rapid advances to attainable perfection. It were, indeed, easy to enumerate names which would do honour to the schools of Greece, and of ancient and modern Italy; but to praise living merit is frequently to excite envy without conferring fame. The ingenious artist, then, must be content to appeal to posterity for unalloyed applause; and, when the tongue of envy shall be wearied with detraction, merited praise will find at last a willing audience. There are sculptors among us of the present day, whose fame will be as durable as the marble which they shape, and who while

they carve the block, may promise themselves, like Thucydides, an everlasting possession.

Those arts, however, after all that has been said in their praise, which tend to flatter the imagination without amending the heart, and the utility of which appears to consist in their administration to pleasure, will, perhaps, be judged unworthy a serious attention by the rigid votaries of severe virtue. Too wise to be captivated with pleasure, they seek only for improvement. The pill that contributes to health they can swallow without requiring it to be covered with gold, or sweetened with honey: but to condemn the productions of the chisel as merely instrumental to delight, is to assume that as a concession which can never be granted. In truth, the imitative arts are capable of conveying moral instruction in the most effectual manner, as their operation is instantaneous. They require not the deductions of logic, which can be made only by cultivated intellects; but by appealing to the senses, which are sometimes combined in great perfection with the rudest minds, they strike immediately and irresistibly on the susceptible heart. The master's hand can give to matter the features of the soul, and impress on the rude block those thoughts and passions which naturally excite congenial sentiments and sympathetic emotions. The mind, which, perhaps, could never be sensible of the beauty of virtue from the reasonings of a Plato or a Socrates, may be captivated with her amiable form when displayed by the manual exertions of a Phidias or Praxiteles.

No man of sensibility can walk in the repositories of the illustrious dead, where the forms that moulder beneath his feet are represented in marble on the walls, without feeling, as he treads the solemn aisle, the most virtuous sensations. His faculties seem to stretch, and his virtues to expand, in efforts to reach the level

of such exalted society. He catches the contagion of virtue by intuition, he forms heroic resolutions of emulating the excellence he admires, and, perhaps, ventures to entertain a secret hope that he may one day fill a niche in the venerable circle of departed worthies The descendant blushes to degenerate from his ancestors, who seem to view him from the sacred walls, and would upbraid him with his baseness. He feels himself stimulated to equal, if not to surpass, their virtues, and out-shine their glory.

Sculpture has, likewise, another no less efficacious, though more indirect, influence on the morals. It has, in common with all the fine arts, a powerful effect in softening the temper and humanizing the manners; an effect which will, perhaps, be felt and acknowledged by none but men of delicate taste and elegant attainments. The votaries of gain, of luxury, or of coarse pleasure, have lost, by the grossness of their enjoyments, that nice susceptibility of impressions, that tenderness of feeling, which alone can perceive, with full force, the pleasures of imagination. The vulgar eye gazes with equal satisfaction on the canvass of a Titian and the daubings of a sign-post, and discovers no more ingenuity in the works of the statuary than in the rude image of the mere mechanic: but they whose natural feelings have been properly improved by culture, nor have yet become callous by attrition with the world, know from experience how the heart is mollified, the manners polished, and the temper sweetened by a well-directed study of the arts of imitation. A fine sensibility of artificial excellence insensibly extends itself to the perception of natural and moral beauty; and the student returns from the artist's gallery to his station in society, with a breast more disposed to feel and to reverberate the endearments of social life, and of reciprocal benevolence.

Sculpture claims, indeed, the power of exciting virtue, and the privilege of rewarding it. Many of the great benefactors to mankind have been animated in danger, and supported in fatigue, by the enlivening hope of enjoying a future existence in the memory of posterity. Satisfied with this recompence in reversion, heroes, patriots, and philosophers, have neglected the calls of interest and the allurements of pleasure, to advance the happiness of society, and to adorn humanity. The sweet solace of their pain, the compensation of their labours, for which the heart has often panted, and every faculty has toiled, may be ultimately conferred by the hand of the statuary. Let not, therefore, the art be prostituted to perpetuate insignificance or vice, and to gratify the vanity of undeserving opulence, which possesses the power of rewarding virtue, and of bestowing immortality on perishable excellence.

No. LXIX.

ON THE PROPRIETY OF EXTENDING CLASSICAL STUDIES TO NATURAL AND EXPERIMENTAL PHILOSOPHY, AND UNITING PHILOLOGY WITH SCIENCE.

STUDENTS who have been most attached to classical literature, and who consequently have succeeded best in it, have often been grossly ignorant of those pleasing parts of science, the laws and operations of nature.

Were it only for the sake of variety, and the pleasure resulting from it, I would beg leave to suggest to classical scholars the propriety of extending the objects of their pursuit. Poetry, history, moral philosophy, and philology, though truly delightful of themselves, will become more so when the sameness of the ideas which they represent is relieved by the interesting, diversified, and unbounded scenes of natural philosophy. It is like going into a beautiful country which we never saw before, or like the arrival of a new season

of the year, when we make an excursion from classical ground, on which we have long dwelt, into the territories of natural science. An assemblage of ideas entirely new is presented to the mind of him who never before deviated from the flowery, but comparatively narrow, paths of philology. His understanding is refreshed with variety, and enriched with new acquisitions; and he returns, after a salutary change, to criticism, history, poetry, and whatever else constitutes polite letters, with a more eager appetite.

A knowledge of nature and of arts, as well as sciences, supplies a copious source of new ideas to the classical writer. Moral maxims and historical examples can scarcely fail, after letters have been long cultivated, to lose the grace and attraction of novelty. But from natural philosophy new allusions, new exemplifications, new similitudes, new comparisons, and new images of all kinds, are easily deduced. What is borrowed from this department cannot have been entirely anticipated by the ancients; since how little did they know of electricity, magnetism, hydrostatics, optics, pneumatics, and a thousand other most entertaining subjects, in which philosophy appears subservient to manufactures and the accommodation of common life! A man may have read the best Greek and Latin classics, and scarcely have one just and truly philosophical idea of the more curious physical phænomena of the orb on which he lives.

I wish, indeed, that classical taste may always be united with a competent knowledge of the sciences. I am convinced it would be for the advantage of both. For if it be true, on the one hand, that classical scholars have been often most disgracefully ignorant of things, it is also true, on the other, that natural philosophers have often been unable to give their discoveries that pleasing dress which classical taste alone can bestow,

and which is necessary to allure the general attention. By a reciprocal participation of each other's knowledge, the classic would become more solid, and the naturalist, more pleasing. At the same time it must be confessed, that solid science ought not to be superfluously decorated, nor delivered in the style of rhetoric. Besides that a profusion of misplaced ornaments is always unpleasing, tropes, figures, and unnecessary epithets, would introduce an obscurity most unfavourable to the progress of science. The Attic style seems, indeed, peculiarly suited to scientific productions; and if Aristotle is too little ornamented, yet his chastity, correctness, and purity, seldom fail to please on a diligent perusal. Pliny the elder is, however, a more agreeable model of style, though his selection of matter is extremely culpable.

We have, indeed, many writers in natural philosophy who were trained in classical schools, and who were early polished by the elegances of philological literature. But in their subsequent studies they seem to have relinquished the models of the golden ages, and to have written with little solicitude to please by their style, provided they were able to communicate information. The consequence has been, that many fine discoveries of original philosophers have either passed unnoticed by the common reader, or they have been represented in a style of languid and flowery description by writers whose knowledge of nature was too superficial to enable them to communicate it with accuracy.

But, in truth, it must be allowed, that classical scholars have been much oftener ignorant of physiological learning than natural philosophers of polite letters. Many of our very eminent poets, when they have occasionally introduced descriptions of the animal, vegetable, or fossil productions of nature, have com-

mitted egregious mistakes. To the honour of the poet of the Seasons, it has been remarked, that he was an accurate observer of those appearances which he delighted to describe.

But without insisting on the utility of physiological science as preparatory to composition, one may ask, who is there that pretends to the character of the general scholar, or the man of a comprehensive mind, that would choose to live his days without seeing the new world which is opened to his view by the microscope, the telescope, and all the curious machines of the experimentalist? What student would neglect to look into the entertaining volumes of a Ray, a Derham, an Adams, a Baker, a Swammerdam, a Keil, a Rowning, a Hales, a Cotes, a Clare, a Halley, a Boerhaave, a Linné, a Buffon, a Ferguson, or a Pennant? To shut our eyes on such glorious scenes as they exhibit, is, as Milton calls it, an injury and sullenness against nature. In this age and country, lectures in experimental philosophy are read in every part of the kingdom, and the student has an opportunity of acquainting himself with the most curious discoveries in physics at a very trifling expense, and without the trouble of furnishing and managing a costly and complicated apparatus; an inestimable advantage, and such an one as the philosophers of antiquity would have traversed the world to enjoy. I have been astonished to see how very careless in this respect, even men of sense and liberal education are found, and how few, comparatively, attend the lectures of the experimentalist. Even in the university of Oxford, I can remember very few, comparatively, used to attend the professors who read most ingenious lectures on astronomy, chemistry, and natural philosophy. The classical scholars seemed rather to despise that kind of learning; and, indeed, we usually undervalue what we do not understand.

I have frequently been surprised to find how few, in comparison, visit that noble repository of nature's productions, the British Museum. Many thousands, and those too in the more enlightened ranks, have lived and died within a mile or two of it, without having once had the curiosity to inspect it. Ye shades of Pliny and Aristotle, how idignant must ye have been, if ye observed a people pretending a love of science, yet regardless of such invaluable treasures, even at their thresholds!

That the vulgar and illiterate should be incurious is not surprising; but that the classical scholar should be contentedly ignorant of nature's works, and of the modern improvements in science, is no less astonishing than disgraceful. To those who are induced, by their knowledge of a few languages, and of the classics, to think themselves completely accomplished in all human learning, I will recommend the perusal of the notes to the preface of Chambers's Dictionary.

No. LXX.

ON THE EFFECTS OF BAD EXAMPLE AMONG MENIAL SERVANTS, DOMESTICS, AND DEPENDANTS.

It is found by experience, that there are few orders in the community more profligate than the servants and domestic dependants of debauched and dissipated persons in high life. They are greatly to be pitied, as many causes concur to render their corruption almost unavoidable. They have usually been slightly educated, if educated at all; and are often thrust, at an early age, into a wicked world, destitute of all principles, moral and religious.

Indeed, the profligacy among the servants of the corrupted rich orders, is no trifling evil. Much of the corruption of the common people is certainly caused and increased by their example. The following is a

se too common in the country village. A young
an, with all the happy simplicity of honesty and inno-
nce, is engaged, in consequence of the good character
ich he bears, in the service of the neighbouring
rd. He goes to the metropolis, and spends a winter
the low haunts of the lowest debauchery and
unkenness. While his master is engaged in the
enes of polite amusement, the poor menial, who
aits for him during the tedious watches of the night,
laces himself in the ale-house or the night-cellar,
nidst all that can corrupt by examples of fraud, ex-
ss, ill-language, and every vice which debases
manity. His honest parents, and his brothers and
sters, are in the meantime enjoying the sweet slum-
rs procured by labour and temperance.

At the return of summer, the poor fellow retires
ith his master into the country. He is finely dressed,
nd naturally excites the admiration of the village and
s own family. What he says comes from him with
ne authority of an oracle. He considers himself,
ndeed, as greatly enlightened, and undertakes to
mmunicate the illumination. In the first place, he
dicules the rusticity of his friends and neighbours,
nd laughs at their awkward dress and behaviour.
Their patient submission to labour he calls plodding
nd slavery; their sobriety and temperance, covetous-
ess and meanness; the conjugal affection and regard
o decency, ignorance of the world; and their religion,
nperstition.

He commonly confirms his opinions by alleging the
xample of his lord. "My lord," says he, "I would
ave you know, is a great man, a very great man.
Therefore you may depend upon it, whatever your
odly books may teach you to the contrary, that his
nanner of acting and thinking is right, and such as is
nost conducive to happiness and enjoyment. Now

this is my lord's plan: He drinks, games, swears, runs in debt, and never thinks of paying his bill at the shop; though, to do him justice, if he loses at cards, he always pays ready money. My lord, likewise, keeps two or three mistresses, besides his wife, with whom, indeed, he never sleeps; but then he lets her go very grand; and though two or three of our milliners and mantua-makers have broke since they have served us, spares no cost in supporting her appearance. My lord never goes to church, but calls the parsons a pack of hypocrites, and employs his Sunday either in travelling, or in cards, dice, drinking, and visiting the ladies. I usually stand behind my master's chair at dinner, and attend very closely to all the conversation; so that I often pick up a great deal of improvement: and from all I have been able to collect, I am led to conclude, that what we hear in sermons, and read in the Bible, is all nonsense; and that the true wisdom is to gratify one's senses and passions as much as one can, get money in any manner, provided it can be gotten safely, and live jollily. So keep it up, my lads, and follow mine and my lord's example!"

The lads and lasses of the village listen to his lesson with mouths open, and hearts panting to imitate their kind instructor. Many immediately relinquish the plough and the dairy, and hasten up to London in pursuit of fine clothes, money, and pleasure.—They who remain behind endeavour not to be outdone by their old comrade, the footman, in drunkenness, gaming, and debauchery; and the village, from being the seat of peace, innocence, industry, and contentment, becomes the sink of sin and misery. Many soon emigrate from it to supply the Strand, and the colony in the South Sea.

This is really no exaggerated representation. There are few country gentlemen who do not consider the

summer residence of a dissipated man of fashion, or gamester, or luxurious nabob in their neighbourhood as a serious evil, because of the corruption of morals which his corrupted servants introduce. There are not many villages where some Mr. John or Mrs. Abigail, after a winter in London, does not endeavour to turn the country people from the errors of their ways, by obliquely teaching them that virtue is ignorance. The example of rank and riches adds a weight to their arguments, which nothing but woful experience can counterpoise. So extensive has the contagion been considered, that I have seen it mentioned in advertisements of houses on sale, as a very great recommendation, that there was no great man's seat within nine miles of the situation.

Though riches and titles often render their owners adepts in a new kind of philosophy, and teach them to see the vanity of morality and religion in their own case; yet they cannot prevent the want of morality and religion, when it appears in their own servants and dependants, from being severely felt by themselves. Persons in high life do, indeed, in these times, often pretend to extraordinary benevolence, because it happens to be the fashion. Let, then, their benevolence be rendered conspicuous among those of their own household, and those of the villages and towns which border on their paternal estates. We cannot help distrusting their pretensions to patriotism, to a love of mankind, to universal benevolence, when we see them, by the force of their powerfnl example, unloosing all the moral and religious restraints which tend to preserve the innocence and happiness of individuals and communities; when we see them carelessly diffusing drunkenness, debauchery, disease, and infidelity, among those whom fortune has rendered the humble ministers of their luxury and pride.

No. LXXI.

ON MUSIC, AS AN AMUSEMENT.

Most of the pleasurable diversions have a tendency, when pursued with excessive ardour, not only to relax in a proper degree, but to enervate the mind. They indispose it for manly virtue, and introduce a tenderness of feeling ill-suited to encounter the usual asperities of common life. But the study of music, under due direction, while it sweetly soothes the sense of hearing, touches the soul, and elevates and refines its nature. Conducted by philosophy, it is able to infuse the noblest thoughts, to urge the most animated action, to calm the ruffled spirits, and, co-operating with religion, to eradicate every malignant propensity.

Amid the invectives thrown out against the dissipated manners of the present age, its taste for music deserves applause. Even as a source of sensual pleasure, it is one of the purest and most dignified; yet it may be lamented that it is cultivated merely as a sensual pleasure. That which titillates the ear often by the most artificial complication of harmony, is not always best calculated to affect the heart. Simple music, for which the present age seems to have little relish, is capable of producing the most powerful effects on the human bosom; and the neglect of it is the cause that the mind is often not at all interested in the most celebrated performances at the modern concert.

He who has made music the study of his life, and possesses an ear refined by application to fastidious delicacy, is pleased with the curious productions of the Italian composer. But let the admired composition be performed in the hearing of another, whose natural powers are equally sensible, but who has been used to the works of Purcell and Handel only, and he will find his ear not greatly delighted, and his affections totally unmoved.

The kind of music, however excellent as a piece of
t, which penetrates no farther than the ear, pro-
ıces an effect quite different from what was intended
r the original invention. As a pleasure of the sense,
ough elegant in a high degree, it yet contributes to
ıbecility. The inartificial music of the drum, at
hich the connoisseur might be enraged, is better able
produce the genuine effects of music, lively emotions
mind, than the finest modulations of an Italian
ɔera.

Of what kind is the music that delights those who
e stigmatised by the name of vulgar, but who possess
l the faculties of perception in a state undepraved by
tificial refinement? Such persons are the uncorrupted
ns of nature; and the sounds which universally please
ıem are sounds which nature intended to please, and
r which she adapted the finely-susceptible sense.
he drum, the fife, the trumpet, the harp, the bagpipe,
ıd the dulcimer, are the instruments which inspire
ıe lower ranks with joy and with courage, and which
leviate the sense of the greatest labours and the
eatest dangers. If we were to suppose a Giardini
ndescending to play a fine Italian piece of music at
rural fair, there is little doubt but his audience would
stolen away from him by the itinerant performer on
Scotch bagpipe or the hurdy-gurdy.

There are certain ballads and certain tunes adapted
them, which are known to almost every individual in
nation, and which please on every repetition. The
usic as well as the poetry of these is perfectly simple.
he Scotch tunes have a sweetness which delight every
ır unspoiled by the complex productions of laborious
genuity, but which the Italian master condescends
ɔt to intermix in his boasted composures. And yet
ɔthing can be more natural and easy than the sweet
ild wood-notes of the Highland swain.

There are also certain psalm tunes, which, with

little merit as technical performances, are able to excite in the mind a great degree of devotional ecstacy. Those of the hundredth and the hundred-and-fourth Psalms are the most popular music in England; and they are no less adapted to excite a spirit of piety, and elevate the soul to heaven, than to soothe the ear by their simple melody.

These observations are adduced with a view to recommend the adoption of a taste for simple music among those who study music merely for the entertainment of a domestic circle. It appears to be more pleasing to the ear in its natural state than the laboured and complicated productions of the professed modern musician; and experience abundantly proves that it powerfully affects the heart and the imagination. If, then, it were received in those numerous families, where, in the present age, music forms a constant diversion, its effects on the morals of the people at large would be truly important. It would elevate with piety, warm with generosity, enlarge, ennoble, correct, and purify every social affection. There is scarcely any sentiment which may not be excited, increased, diminished, or modified, by a piece of music, simple enough to be strongly expressive. Thus powerful as well as sweet, it is to be wondered at, as well as regretted, that it should be superseded by a species of complicated harmony, ingenious, indeed, in a high degree, yet possessing little other claim to attention but as it affords an elegant amusement for a vacant hour. Music at present often forms a considerable part of female education; and it is to be lamented, that an accomplishment, which, when properly regulated, is most efficacious in filling the young mind with virtuous and generous sentiments, should form only an innocent pastime and polite employment.

Paradoxical as it may appear, it is really true, that

ıusic seems of late to be addressed to the eye as well ı to the ear. Dexterity of execution, the wonderfully ɾpeditious motion of the fingers, the hand, and the ːm, cause an equal share of applause with the tones ſ the instrument. He who can hold his breath the ıngest is proportionally honoured with the longest ıntinuation of plaudits. The sweetest shepherd that ɾer piped on his Doric reed would be less applauded ıan he who can make his pipe squeak for the space ſ five minutes without respiration. The simple lyre ſ Apollo would scarcely engage attention while the ŋger of a modern is dancing on the strings of a vio- ıncello. To attain this stupendous excellence of ıpid execution requires the unremitted labour of a ſe; while a much less degree of application would ıable a performer to ravish and captivate the heart if ıe natural feelings of the audience were not super- ɛded by an acquired taste.

It is often urged as a reason for neglecting the ːudy and the performance of music, that to excel in ˌ or to play in such a manner as not to offend a judge, ɛquires a portion of time incompatible with an attention ı more valuable acquirements. To arrive at this sur- rising expedition, this musical legerdemain, it is, indeed, ecessary to do little else than scrape and pipe. But a ɔmparatively moderate dexterity is sufficient to effect ll the great purposes of music,—those of moving the assions in the cause of virtue, and of exciting senti- ıents of manly pleasure. Fortunately, the simple ıusic which is to produce these desirable effects is the ıost easily performed. The most powerful influence ſ music ever known is recorded in the volumes of ntiquity; but it is certain, that the musical instruments ſ antiquity were simple in so great a degree, that it has erplexed the modern musician to discover how they ɾere capable of producing any tolerable music. Yet

the feats of Timotheus, though astonishing, perhaps were not fabulous. He, indeed, who looks into the Opera-house after reading Dryden's Ode, will be induced, from the vacant countenance and sleepy eye, to judge that the musical art of Timotheus may be numbered among the lost arts in which antiquity excelled, and which the moderns ambitiously, yet vainly, imitate.

To produce the full effect of music, it is necessary that the sister art which operates in conjunction with it should not be united to it by a forced alliance.—Good poetry and good music, each of which is separately powerful, acquire, by a proper union, an irresistible force over the human heart. Yet every one knows, that many a fine piece of music is deformed by the most wretched rhymes that were ever tagged by a hungry poetaster. Songs we have in abundance, written by authors of acknowledged excellence; and it is surely a want of spirit to adopt, in preference to these, the nonsense which a musician has purchased in Grub-street to be accompanied by his excellent melody. It is, indeed, to be wished, that the superior poets of the age would combine with the best composers of music, and do honour to themselves, and to the arts they love, in cementing, by the liberal communication of mutual assistance, so natural and desirable an union as that of music and poetry. It is a great improvement lately adopted among singers, that they take pains to let the words, as well as the music of their songs, distinctly reach the ears of those whom they profess to entertain or delight.

No. LXXII.

ON THE BEST METHOD OF EXCITING LITERARY GENIUS IN BOYS WHO POSSESS IT.

THAT tender sensibility which always accompanies true genius often lays open the heart to such early

impressions as are very unfavourable to a virtuous and prudential conduct. Many parents have, therefore, expressed a wish, that their sons might possess a plain understanding, without any of that fine and susceptible delicacy which is supposed to constitute a genius.

But it appears to me that genius, that glorious gift of Heaven, ought not to be so lightly esteemed. To be superior to other men in the superior part of man, the mind; to perceive external nature with greater acuteness than others; to possess the powers of memory, reflection, imagination, to a fuller extent; and to be more feelingly alive to all the affections of the heart; what is it but to have been favoured by Heaven with a more excellent nature, to have been rendered capable of distinguished happiness, and of communicating good in an effectual and extensive manner to the world at large? Not to wish for such a condition as this, not to be thankful for it when it has fallen to ourselves or our children, is a degree of ingratitude disgraceful to humanity.

And if it be true, that genius is exposed to peculiar dangers at an early age, I would not infer that genius is not to be desired, but that the moral conduct of him in whom it appears should be kept under the restraints of parental authority with peculiar strictness of discipline and vigilance of observation. It is not sufficient merely to give moral cautions, but actual restraints must be imposed; for, after all the boasts of moral philosophy, the most effectual method of restraining young people from vice is to watch them circumspectly, to keep them within bounds, and to remove them from temptation. That susceptibility of temper, which, when unrestrained, leads to vicious habits and indulgences, will strongly attach itself to all that is laudable and lovely, if care be taken that nothing but what is truly so be allowed to solicit the attention,

Elegant letters will furnish a variety of delightful objects, capable of engrossing both the affections and the imagination, so long as the dangerous allurements of the senses are, as much as possible, removed from the view.

Genius, then, being an endowment most desirable, and not necessarily attended either with misconduct or misfortune, I shall think myself usefully employed in attempting to point out a few methods which may contribute to excite it. The steel must be struck in a proper manner, and with proper materials, before the latent spark can be elicited.

Instead of exercising the understanding only at a very early age, I think a very considerable share of attention should be paid to the cultivation of the fancy. For this purpose, the most entertaining story-books should be read as an amusement; the more romantic, the better adapted to the purpose. The popular histories of giants and fairies, enchanted castles, and ideal beings of uncouth form, and whatever strongly strikes the imagination, or deeply affects the heart, are calculated to vivify the latent seeds of embryo genius. Many of those little books, contemptible as they now appear, which are sold by itinerant pedlars to children and servants, and which are thought too mean to deserve the attention of the learned, formerly constituted the mental food of our sublimest writers in the age of infancy. Not only the old romances, but the common historical ballads of rudest composition, have been read with delight by our best poets, in the early periods of English literature. The works of Shakespeare bear evident marks of that species of reading in which he took pleasure. His witches, his magicians, his ghosts, and all those airy nothings to which he gave a local habitation and a name, owe their origin to the poet's feeding his fancy on the romantic and superstitious

writings of the darker ages. It appears, too, that Milton was extensively acquainted with romances, and that he felt a peculiar pleasure in their perusal. The examples of such men powerfully confirm the propriety of that mode of exciting genius which I principally recommend.

But this sort of books must be placed in the hands of children who show symptoms of genius, merely as matter of entertainment; and if children do not delight in them, they must be laid aside for a more convenient season. It would be ridiculous to read them as a task, and would, indeed, frustrate the intention; for it is the delight which they afford to the infant fancy which constitutes their principal utility. They are found, for the most part, to be particularly adapted to the curious and inexperienced mind of sensible children; they are read with the closest attention; they enable the soul to feel its lively energies expanding to strength and maturity; and they operate on the pregnant mind like a warm vernal shower on a fertile meadow, eliciting the tenderest herbs and flowerets.

It must, indeed, be allowed, that with all their fascinating power over the young imagination, they sometimes exhibit nonsense and futility; many parents and instructors will therefore object to the perusal of them. If these, however, may be rejected, as they must always be when they contain any thing immoral, yet I think it absolutely necessary that some books of similar effect should be substituted in their place; and I cannot help thinking, that none are better suited to the purpose than those of Milton and Shakespeare. An objector may urge, that a young boy will often be at a loss to understand them. But let not this be regarded. Let him read on, and pass over what he does not understand at the first reading, without impeding his progress. He will of course understand them

better on every subsequent reading; and his genius will be called forth much more powerfully by dwelling on what he understands, and receiving a proper impression from it, than by stopping to develope difficulties with the coldness of a critical commentator.

Simple, narrative, and pathetic poetry, is, indeed, so pleasing to the pure and unvitiated mind of boys, that it can scarcely fail to excite their genius, if they possess any; but there are also many works in prose capable of producing the same effect. Rousseau has recommended Robinson Crusoe. I entirely agree with him on the peculiar propriety of feeding the young mind with a book so interesting, and so easy of comprehension. Don Quixote may be recommended for the same purpose. Oriental tales, such as abound in the periodical essayists, are peculiarly proper. Old Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, though a strange performance, very powerfully affects the fancy, and may be used with great advantage in accomplishing the purpose of exciting genius. The Arabian Nights Entertainments, the Tales of the Genii, and the Death of Abel, though they may not be entirely approved by a mature understanding and taste, are well calculated to kindle the flame of genius in the bosom of boys: but, perhaps, no book would be found to afford better passages for this purpose than the Bible, if a little care were taken by the superintendents of education, to select those parts which are so beautifully distinguished for simple sublimity and unaffected pathos. The poetry of the Bible contributed much to the sublimity of Milton.

No. LXXIII.

ON THE REASONABLENESS OF THE ANTIQUARIAN TASTE.

THE baneful effects of those prejudices which the mind forms from an early and wrong association of

ideas, have been often felt and deplored in the several departments of morals, of science, and of religion. They have been experienced in a similar manner, though, indeed, with less injury to society, in a province, where the want of adequate objects to excite jealousy and passion might be supposed to preclude their operation; in the studies of humanity and polite letters. To the influence of unjust prepossession it must be attributed, that some kinds of literary pursuits, indisputably innocent at least, such as the study of antiquities, have been attacked with all the shafts of ridicule.

One circumstance which has contributed to extenuate the value of researches into antiquity, is a very exalted opinion of the scientific attainments of the present age. If progressive improvement is universally, and in every instance, the consequence of progressive years, the opinion and the result of it might, perhaps, be well founded. But though it must be allowed, that the advancement of valuable science has been disproportionably rapid within the space of the last two or three centuries; though the invention of printing, of the compass, of many auxiliary instruments, and the diffusion of a liberal spirit, have facilitated modern inquiries of every kind, and consequently accumulated a sum of knowledge which preceding ages could scarcely hope to attain; yet it must be considered that, in the long interval of mental darkness which preceded these inventions, many historical events must have happened, many practices prevailed, many modes of accommodation have been adopted, which it may concern mankind to know, but which cannot be recalled but by the labours of the antiquary. The general light enjoyed by the present age is strong and diffusive; but it cannot illuminate these distant periods, unless its beams are concentred upon them. The rays of the sun are abundantly sufficient to guide our steps

on the surface of the earth; but he who investigates the subterraneous cavern must have recourse to the assistance of the lamp.

The deep researches of our modern antiquaries have sometimes thrown additional light on Scriptural subjects, and have had no inconsiderable influence in dissipating the doubts of the sceptical. The discovery and explanation of a medal by a most ingenious illustrator of ancient mythology, have exhibited to the deist a very powerful confirmation of the Scriptural account of the deluge. It is certainly an erroneous judgment which has censured the studies of the medallist as nugatory. To ancient coins, gems, and medals, learning in general is greatly indebted, and history owes some of its most authentic records. All the usual materials to which writing has been committed are of a perishable nature, exposed to irrecoverable destruction from a thousand slight accidents, and inevitably doomed to perish, after a short period, by the corrosion of time. But the inscription on the faithful metal has been preserved without injury from the earliest periods of civilisation. To seem to pay a veneration to rust, and to estimate the current coin at less than the mutilated brass or copper of a Roman emperor, may appear ridiculous to him who has not duly considered the extensive utility of these acquisitions; but he who has observed light reflected from an apparently contemptible coin on history, sacred and profane, will respect the laudable and disinterested pursuits of the virtuoso.

Nor will it be found, that in subjects of comparatively less importance than the truth of religion, and the authenticity of historical information, the result of antiquarian labour is destitute of utility. He must have formed a very inadequate idea of the powers and the energy of the human intellect, who imagines that

nothing was produced, even in the darkest ages, by the efforts of native ingenuity worthy the adoption of a more refined period. Not only in science, but in politics and economics, in the less splendid arts which administer to convenience and enjoyment, much information may be derived, by careful search, from times which have been in general neglected as affording nothing to repay the labour of attention. This at least is certain, that whatever they afford of real use can be cleared from the embarrassment in which it is entangled only by the sagacious antiquary. The ignorance of the ages in question necessarily occasioned a paucity of written documents or memorials. Few and imperfect as these have been, nothing but unwearied perseverance, joined to great penetration, could draw them from their obscure repositories, and give them a sufficient degree of perspicuity. It is happy for mankind that the love of antiquities is a passion which operates with no inconsiderable force. Nothing less could stimulate the laborious student to such long and painful investigations as are often necessary to procure satisfactory information. He, however, who has perseverance enough to surmount all difficulties which oppose his progress in a dark and rugged path, ought to be vindicated from the censures of raillery, however futile his discovery may sometimes appear to a superficial observer. Many of the most excellent principles in the laws of England, many of our envied political institutions, owe their origin to feudal times; to those times which the classical scholar is tempted to overlook, as presenting little to exercise and reward ingenuity. But it may reasonably be concluded, that they who could devise legal and civil modes of judging and acting avowedly worthy the imitation of the most improved ages, were often equally successful in their other inventions. In developing these, the antiquary

sometimes finds, and perhaps dwells upon, less important matters, which are only entertaining; but he is no more to be condemned than the voyager who stops to contemplate the curiosities which occur in his passage, yet at the same time forgets not the place or object of his destination.

It has been mistakenly supposed, that the studies of the antiquary are destitute of entertainment. To the lover of them they unquestionably have afforded pleasure, even under the most disadvantageous circumstances; but, in the present age, they have also entered on a department which engages the attention of the general scholar, and the man of taste and polite learning. They have been employed in recovering, from ancient manuscripts and scarce books, the poetry of our forefathers; and he who is most averse from the more dry and recondite researches, must acknowledge his obligations to those who have judiciously compiled the relicks of our ancient poetry.

Obvious as appears the utility of inquiring into the obscure scenes of remote antiquity, it has given rise to sarcasm and ridicule. Circumstances, it must be confessed, have sometimes arisen which seem to justify some degree of raillery. For it is true, that, in the course of various and profound researches, many collateral discoveries will be made whose sole utility consists in the gratification of curiosity. A common utensil, of little dignity or use, has sometimes exercised the conjectural ingenuity of the antiquary, to the diversion of those who have not imbibed a congenial spirit. But however contemptible the discovery of trifling objects may have been, when considered in itself, it has acquired a degree of value by the general and probable consequence. It has often led to objects of real importance, by suggesting hints which might never have occurred, had not the inquiry been com-

menced and prosecuted with vigour. And the maxim established in a less liberal pursuit, that the smallest gains are not to be neglected by him who endeavours to amass a fortune, must be steadily attended to in a successful pursuit of knowledge.

And, indeed, allowing that many of the results of antiquarian sagacity are not of high importance, yet will not this concession tend to render the study of antiquities a contemptible employment. It is a fruitful source of the pleasures of imagination. That lively faculty of the human mind is greatly delighted with the effort it makes in turning back to past ages, in being intimately conversant with manners and characters totally different from the present, in bringing back to view scenes that have long vanished, and tracing the progress of human improvements from their embryo state to their comparative maturity.

That which affords this species and degree of pleasure is highly worthy of cultivation. For it may with justice be asserted, that they who judge scarcely any thing worthy of serious pursuit which is not attended with evident and palpable profit, are too severe in their restrictions. Their conceptions are certainly too limited, when they circumscribe advantage within the bounds of personal or even public emolument. Every intellectual effort which calls off the attention from less refined avocations, every liberal study which furnishes an innocent pleasure, is useful, as it is favourable to virtue by adding to the number of safe indulgences.

No. LXXIV.

OBJECTIONS TO THE STUDY OF ANTIQUITIES WHEN IMPROPERLY PURSUED.

To arraign any part of those studies which exercise the talents of the liberal and ingenious, is by no means

a desirable province. Under certain circumstances, and with due restrictions, they are all in a high degree laudable. But since excellence admits gradations, and since even estimable qualities and virtuous exertions are rendered blameable by excess, it becomes expedient to point out the line which separates fictitious from real utility, and to rescind those redundancies, which, like a morbid excrescence on a beautiful body, superinduce deformity on grace, and give an alloy to intrinsic value. Such an attempt, instead of extenuating, will tend to enhance the worth of those things which are really valuable.

These ideas will perhaps justify us in reviewing the objections which may be made to the pursuits of the antiquary. Though these pursuits are unquestionably too respectable to be condemned in general, yet their perversion and their excess afford ample scope for liberal censure.

That the studies of the antiquary have afforded matter for comic ridicule is not to be wondered at, when it is considered with how serious an air he has usually descanted on trifling subjects. An implement originally contemptible, and rendered still more worthless by decay, no sooner falls into the hands of the admirer of ancient remains, than it excites a degree of admiration approaching to idolatry, and furnishes matter for a profound dissertation. Many fanciful conjectures are formed, a thousand collateral hints suggested, and a decisive sentence at last pronounced with the formal process of dictatorial authority. After all the learning displayed and sagacity exerted, it not unusually happens that a spectator, under the guidance of common sense, discovers that what has given rise to so much discussion is of modern fabric and invention, accidentally or artfully disguised.—Among the various modes of acquiring money invented by the restless

ind of man, it has been one to imitate the effects of ne, to make an artificial rust, to accelerate decay, d deceive the antiquary.

Few studies are so much exposed to the delusion of rgery as those of antiquities. Though the antiquary s sometimes made his palate the criterion of a enuine rust, and has been able to taste the difference tween Roman or Attic *ærugo*, and the sophisticated llution of the modern counterfeit; yet, by the tem- rary indisposition of the organs of taste, he has often en known to admit into his invaluable collection eces of less value and of less antiquity than the west coin of the current specie. Many an Otho has en fabricated by a modern copper-smith, who has rned his base metal to good account by converting it to the twelve Cæsars. And a piece of brass, cried wn as too base to pass with the stamp of a modern onarch, has become current and valuable among tiquaries as the coin of a Roman emperor.

Nor is a full dependence to be placed on those chives and written memorials, on the authenticity of hich modern history most confidently relies. An stance of the facility with which an appearance of tiquity can be given to the parchment has occurred our own times and country. The late ingenious, ut unfortunate, author of the pretended poems of owley was able not only to imitate the modes of riting which prevailed among our ancestors, but to olour the parchment with the spurious marks of anti- uity in so artful a manner as to deceive even those ho were conversant in ancient writings, and who were stly esteemed for their superior penetration. And he misfortune is, that, as the love of antiquities be- omes more prevalent, the multitude of such impo- itions increases from the hope of additional reward. he pleasure which some have found in successful

deception has given rise to wanton forgery; and, while a great share of attention continues to be paid to the relicks of past ages, such deceits will abound, because they are easy to invent and are productive of gain. They who are best able to repay the labours of ingenious research, are often most exposed to the delusions of the artful, by that degree of sanguine ardour which they possess, and which is wholly incompatible with the exercise of discernment.

To assert that history has seldom received valuable light from the studies of the antiquary, is to indulge in declamatory invective at the expense of veracity. And yet it must be confessed, that the accession to real and important knowledge has scarcely been proportionate to the labour exerted. Curiosity has been abundantly gratified; but it does not appear that many of the discoveries which have afforded pleasure have been attended with any other consequence greatly desirable. It does not appear that much light has been derived from them for the direction of manual arts, for the illustration of physical phænomena, for the regulation of manners, for the embellishment or for the accommodation of life. That degree of ingenuity and perseverance which might have made valuable improvements in all these departments, has been often wasted in dull musæums, and lavished away in producing unsatisfactory conjectures on subjects where even obvious truth would be unimportant. The boasted information of ancient coins and marbles is for the most part imperfect, often equivocal, and sometimes unintelligible. The perspicacious eye of an antiquary has, indeed, discovered inscriptions satisfactory to himself, but which could neither be seen nor acknowledged by the more obtuse vision of a common observer. Inscriptions thus ambiguous, and information thus obscure, though they may give scope for ingenious conjecture,

and amuse the curious, can seldom afford solid support, or give clear illustration to the page of history.

With respect to the collector of that kind of relicks which were at first of no value, are attended with no useful consequence near or remote, and derive all their power of exciting esteem from the marks of that duration which has occasioned their decay, he certainly has done discredit to the study of antiquities. He has pursued trifles with an ardour justifiable only in important business, and consumed time and ingenuity in effecting no adequate purpose. By the discerning part of mankind he will be classed in the same rank with the admirer of a trinket, the hunter of a butterfly, the cultivator of a flower, and the connoisseur in mosses. Such pursuits we acknowledge to be harmless; and the praise usually terminates in that single epithet. He who venerates a contemptible relick is actuated with a degree of the pilgrim's superstition, less pernicious, indeed, in its effects, but scarcely less absurd in its principle.

But let not the justice of liberal and candid censure be disgraced by indiscriminate and general invective. From the researches of those who have brought to light the antiquities of ancient Greece and Rome, from our own Potter and Kennet, our scholastic studies derive daily assistance. It is easy to enumerate the names of many who have very successfully laboured in this department. Our own country can display a long list of illustrious antiquaries, who have judiciously trodden in the footsteps of a Camden, a Leland, and a Hearne. It must at the same time be lamented, that it can exhibit a great number, who, by perverting the pursuit, have rendered it ridiculous.

Raillery and censure are, perhaps, more frequently misplaced and ill-directed than applause. They have often been carried to excess, and pointed at wrong

objects, when they have chosen the study of antiquities for the display of their poignancy. The attack should be levelled only at abuses and perversion. The correction of these will restore its proper dignity to the study of antiquities, and cause the shafts of ridicule which have been successfully thrown at it to recoil on the aggressors. The result will be, that the attention which is due to real excellence and experienced utility, will cease to be paid to objects which possess only an imaginary value, derived from an equivocal or supposititious source, the ideal merit of a long duration.

No. LXXV.

ON THE NECESSITY OF AN ATTENTION TO THINGS AS WELL AS BOOKS, EXEMPLIFIED IN THE INSTANCE OF A FELLOW OF A COLLEGE. [IN A LETTER.]

SIR,

AFTER thirty years constant residence at the university, I thought myself supremely happy when I was at last presented by my college to a living worth three hundred a year. During so long a period, I had treasured up many ideas for the regulation of my future conduct, and congratulated myself that my theory was now to be reduced to practice.

I found my parsonage-house a large antiquated building, in a delightful situation, and capable of very great improvement. I had been used to see every thing around me in the best order, and acquired a love of decency and some degree of ornament, in all the articles of dress and habitation. I sent, therefore, without delay, for the builder, and I gave him an unlimited order to repair every thing in a style of becoming elegance. The work was done entirely to my mind; and I had nothing to find fault with but the bill, which came to three times the sum mentioned

in the estimate, and almost exhausted the little savings of a collegiate life.

My garden was laid out in gravel walks, intersecting each other in right angles, and its only ornaments were a few yew-trees clipped into peacocks. I ordered every tree and plant to be rooted up, the walks to be turned to serpentine, and the whole to be planted with the most beautiful shrubs. A close of about an acre at the bottom lay so contiguous that it tempted me to add it to the garden. No labour or ingenuity was spared; and I own I felt a little satisfaction in a consciousness of possessing the grounds about me in a state superior to the esquire himself. In the ardour of reformation it did not occur that I was not only expending more than I could afford, but involving myself in a necessity of keeping an additional and skilful servant constantly to superintend my improvements. I had neglected utility for ornament, and had planted the fir and the laurel instead of the fruit-tree and the pot-herb. After incurring some ridicule of the neighbourhood, I was obliged to change my shrubbery to a cabbage-garden, and to resume my close as a pasture-ground for my pony.

I no sooner settled, than it was suggested to me by an attorney who wanted business, that my living was worth much more than I should receive, and that I owed it to myself and successors to receive the tithe in kind. I entered on the project with great zeal, built a barn, and bought horses and waggons; but in a meeting of farmers, not one of whom could read or write his own name, was talked out of the scheme, and prevailed on to let my living for life two-thirds under its real value.

I had ever entertained exalted ideas of the utility and pleasure of Old English hospitality, and had promised myself a plentiful table whenever I should become master of a house. The best wines, the best

of provisions, were brought to it; and these were allurements that prevented the possibility of its being deserted. The neighbouring gentlemen liked both my port and ale, and I was so happy as to give them satisfaction with my Madeira; a circumstance which though it pleased them and me at the time, was a subject of some uneasiness to my wine-merchant, who found that a pipe a-year was a great tax on an annual income of three hundred pounds.

The baker's, butcher's, and maltster's bill were a kind of manuscripts never met with in the Bodleian, and to the perusal of which I was quite unused. I had much rather have collated a dozen Greek copies, than have cast up a sum consisting of a dozen articles. This disinclination soon introduced a perplexity in my accounts which I was too indolent to unravel, till at last an accumulation of debt required a degree of economy to which my spirit could not without difficulty submit.

I had been used for thirty years to scarcely any interruption save the tinkling of the chapel and the dinner bell, and could not help being disgusted at the noise of servants and the bustle of a family. Amid the din which was seldom interrupted, how often did I wish myself transported to the blissful region of the common room fire-side! Delightful retreat! where never female showed her head since the days of the founder!

There was one circumstance attending my new situation, which, though only an imaginary evil, gave me at first a sensible mortification. As a senior fellow, I was a little monarch within the verge of my college. The statutes had required that persons of the lower degrees should pass before me, nay, stand in the quadrangle, whenever I was present, with heads uncovered. From this general obeisance, and from many

other circumstances, I had been led to conceive myself a person of great importance. I was so, indeed, in the circumscribed limits of my society. But the misfortune was, that I could not easily free myself from the consciousness of it when no longer a member, and expected a similar degree of deference from all I met, which cannot be paid in the busy world without inconvenience.

Though by no means remarkable for diffidence at college, I felt myself awkward and uneasy when admitted into the company of those who were styled the polite. I had thought and read upon most subjects; yet I found my remarks less attended to in a fashionable circle than those of the confessedly illiterate. Matter I possessed; but the manner was wanting. That easy kind of trifling which pleases without fatiguing the attention of the superficial, was not among my academical acquirements. Thus, with a great inclination, and some ability, to join in general conversation and intercourse, I was almost reduced to a state of solitude, and wished in vain for the frank and good-natured associates of the common room.

Upon the whole, my condition is far less happy and less respectable than I had reason to hope. I have discovered, when it is almost too late, that I had confined my views within too narrow limits, by attending only to the affairs of a college. I have learned the necessity of studying things with all the attention paid to an abstruse science; and will recommend it to those whose prospects in life are similar to mine, to devote some part of their time to the consideration of common affairs; of a few mechanic arts, such as concern building, repairing, gardening; of agriculture, and of the manners of husbandmen, with whom, in the business of tithes, they will be obliged to negociate. They will thus not only spend the close of their lives

with more pleasure to themselves, but will more effectually accomplish the ends of the clerical profession.

Of the imprudence of a contrary conduct, I stand a melancholy instance. I am left alone at a time when the amusement of companions is most wanted to help out the last stage in the journey of life. I am both deserted and defrauded. I remain in a total ignorance of the world, at a period when others are become wise by experience; and I am involved in the mistakes of youth, without its amiable qualities to palliate them.

No. LXXVI.

ON THE INFLUENCE OF FASHION.

THEY who are exempted by their elevated condition from the confinement of commercial and professional life, involve themselves in voluntary slavery by engaging in the service of the tyrant, Fashion. They are compelled to abstain from actions in themselves pleasing and innocent, however strong their inclination to them, because the caprice of some distinguished character has prohibited them by his example. Like the dullest of animals, they are driven round the same circle, from which once to deviate would subject them to an appellation of all others the most formidable. To be called profligate, extravagant, intemperate, or even wicked, might be tolerated with patience; but who could bear to live with the epithet of ungenteel?

People of fashion, once admitted to this honourable title, form a little world of their own, and learn to look down upon all others as beings of a subordinate nature. It is, then, a natural question, In what does this superiority consist? It arises not from learning; for the most illiterate claim it, and are indulged in the claim: it arises not from virtue; for the most vicious are not excluded. Wealth, beauty, birth, and elegance, are not the only qualifications for it; because

any enjoy it who have no just pretension to either, d many are denied it who possess them all. It ems to be a combination of numbers under two or ree leaders in high life, who agree to imitate each her, and to maintain, by the majority of voices and e effrontery of pride, that all they do is proper, and they say is sensible; that their dress is becoming, eir manners polite, their houses tasteful, their furni-re, their carriages, all that appertains to them, the odels and standards of real beauty. Those who me not within the pale of their jurisdiction they con-mn, with papal authority, to perpetual insignifi-nce. They stigmatize them, in the aggregate, as ople whom nobody knows, as the scum of the earth, born only to minister to their pride, and to supply wants of their luxury.

Groundless as are the pretensions of this confederacy, pains are avoided to become an adopted member. r this, the stripling squanders his patrimony, and stroys his constitution. For this, the virgin bloom innocence and beauty is withered at the vigils of the d-table. For this, the loss of integrity, and public amy, are willingly incurred; and it is agreed by ny, that it were better to go out of the world, than live in it and be unfashionable.

If this distinction be really valuable, and if the hap-ess or misery of life depend upon obtaining or losing then are the thousands who walk the private paths life objects of the sincerest pity. Some consolation st be devised for the greater part of the community, o have never breathed the atmosphere of St. James's, embarrassed their fortunes, nor ruined their health, pursuit of this glorious elevation. Perhaps on an partial review it will appear, that these are really sessed of that happiness which vanity would arro-e to itself, and yet only seems to obtain.

The middle ranks of mankind are the most virtuous, the best accomplished, and the most capable of enjoying the pleasures and advantages which fall to the lot of human nature. It is not the least of these, that they are free from the necessity of attending to those formalities which engross the attention and waste the time of the higher classes, without any adequate return of solid satisfaction. Horace, who was far less illustrious by his birth and station than by his elegance of manners, was wont to congratulate himself, that he could ride on a little mule to the remotest town in Italy without ridicule or molestation; while his patrons could hardly move a step but with the unwieldy pomp of an equipage and retinue. The single article of dress, which, when splendid, requires the labour and attention of many hours, becomes a wretched task to those who wish to employ their time with honour, with improvement, with pleasure, and the possibily of a satisfactory retrospection.

Visits of form, of which every one complains, yet to which every one in some measure submits, are absolutely necessary to keep up the union of the fashionable confederacy. The more numerous, the more honourable. To be permitted to spend five minutes, or to leave a card at the house of half the inhabitants of the politer streets, is a felicity which compensates all the trouble of attendance and tedious preparation. To behold a train of coaches, some perhaps with coronets on their sides, crowding to their door, to hear the fulminations of a skilful footman, are joys of which the inhabitants of a rural retreat have little conception, but which delightfully affect the fine feelings of those who are made of purer clay, and honoured with the name of fashionable.

From this severe persecution the man who aspires not after such honours is happily free. He visits his

friend and neighbour because he feels friendly sentiments for him, and is received with cordiality. The intervals of company he can devote to study, and to the pursuit of business and amusement; for his communications with his friends require not the long, tedious, preparatory trouble of fashionable formality. In the unreserved pleasures of conversation, he looks with reciprocal pity on formal visitors of the squares in the metropolis, nor envies those who knock at a hundred doors in an evening, and who possess the glorious privilege of sitting half an hour in the company of those who must speak, and look, and move by rule without reason.

The effects of fashion constitute, in the moral world, very wonderful phænomena. Fashion can transform deformity to beauty, and beauty to deformity. When we view the dresses in a picture-gallery, we are tempted to ridicule the shocking taste of our grandfathers and grandmothers; and yet there is not the least doubt but that they appeared beautiful and becoming when they were worn, and that the garb of the spectator who now censures them, would have been then equally ridiculous. During the short period of a life, the fluctuations of taste in dress are strikingly remarkable. A small buckle or a large buckle, a short coat or a long coat, a high or a low head-dress, appear in their turns, in the course of only a few years, laughably absurd. Manners, books, poetry, painting, building, gardening, undergo a similar alteration. The prevailing taste is at the time supposed to be the perfect taste: a few years revolve, and it is exploded as monstrous. A new one is adopted; that also is soon despised: and the old one, in the capricious vicissitudes of the innovating spirit, is once more revived, to repeat its revolution.

There is certainly a standard of rectitude in manners,

decorum, and taste; but it is more easily discovered than preserved. The vanity of the great and opulent will ever be affecting new modes, in order to increase that notice to which it thinks itself exclusively entitled. The lower ranks will imitate them as soon as they have discovered the innovation.—Whether right or wrong, beautiful or deformed, in the essential nature of things, is of little moment. The pattern is set by a superior; and authority will at any time countenance absurdity. A hat, a coat, a shoe, deemed fit to be worn only by a great grand-sire, is no sooner put on by a dictator of fashions, than it becomes graceful in the extreme, and is generally adopted from the first lord of the Treasury to the apprentice in Houndsditch.

It must be allowed, indeed, that while Fashion exerts her arbitrary power in matters which tend not to the corruption of morals, or of taste in the fine arts, she may be suffered to exercise her wayward fancy without limitation. But the misfortune is, that, like other potentates, she will encroach on provinces where her jurisdiction is usurped. The variations she is continually introducing in dress are of service in promoting commerce. The whims of the rich feed the poor. The variety and the restlessness caused by changes in the modes of external embellishment, contribute to please and employ those whose luxurious indolence and personal insignificance prevent them from finding more manly objects and more rational entertainment. But when the same caprice which gives law to the wardrobe extends itself to the library; when the legislature of an assembly dictates in the schools, regulates religion, and directs education, it is time that reason should vindicate her rights against the encroachments of folly.

Yet so fascinating is the influence of general example, that many who possess reason in an improved

state are known to follow fashion with blind obedience. The scholar and the philosopher are hurried away with the rapidity of the torrent. To stand singular, is to present a mark for the shafts of scorn and malevolence. For the sake of ease, therefore, men are induced to join the throng, which they must resist without success, but not without receiving injury in the conflict. Compliance is thought wisdom, where opposition is likely to be inefficacious, and sure to give offence.

With respect to the distinction claimed by people of fashion, it is certain that they who are elevated by station, fortune, and a correspondent education, are often distinguished by a peculiar elegance of manners resulting from their education and society. But this ought not to inspire pride, or teach them to separate from the rest of mankind. It should give them a spirit of benevolence, and lead them to promote the happiness of others, in return for the bountiful goodness of Providence in bestowing on them superior advantages, without any original or natural merit of their own. They should endeavour to convince themselves, that the warmest philanthropist is the truest gentleman, and that the most becoming fashion is to do all the good they can to individuals and to their country.

No. LXXVII.

ON SOME PARTS OF THE DISCIPLINE IN OUR ENGLISH UNIVERSITIES.

Our English universities are held in high esteem among foreigners; and indeed, considering the number of great men who have received a part of their education in them, and their opulent establishments of colleges and professorships, they are really respectable. I have, therefore, been the more disposed to lament, that the public exercises should be so futile

and absurd, as to deserve not only the severity of censure, but the utmost poignancy of ridicule.

Reverence, it has been justly remarked, is always increased by the distance of the object. The world at large, who hear of colleges like palaces devoted to learning, of princely estates bequeathed for the support of professors, of public libraries and schools for every science, are inclined to view the consecrated place in which they abound with peculiar veneration. Accidental visitors, also, who behold the superb dining-halls, painted chapels, the luxurious common-rooms, the elegant chambers, and a race of mortals, in a peculiar dress, strutting through the streets with a solemn air of importance; when they see all the doctors, both the proctors, with all the heads of colleges and halls, in solemn procession, with their velvet sleeves, scarlet gowns, hoods, black, red, and purple—cannot but be struck with the appearance, and are naturally led to conclude, that here, at length, wisdom, science, learning, and whatever else is praise-worthy, for ever flourish and abound.

Without entering into an invidious and particular examination of the subject, we may cursorily observe, that, after all this pompous ostentation and this profuse expense, the public has not, of late at least, been indebted for the greatest improvements in science and learning to all the doctors, both the proctors, nor to all the heads of colleges and halls laid together. That populous university, London, and that region of literary labour, Scotland, have seized almost every palm of scholastic honour, and left the sons of Oxford and Cambridge to enjoy substantial comforts in the smoke of the common or combination room. The bursar's books are the only manuscripts of any value produced in many colleges; and the sweets of pensions, exhibitions, fines, fellowships, and petty offices, the chief objects of academical pursuit.

If I were to enter into the many laughable absurdities of collegiate life and university institutions, as they now stand, I should exceed the limits of my paper. It is my intention at present only to acquaint the public with the exercises, which one celebrated seat of the Muses requires of those who seek the envied honour of a Master of Arts' degree. I speak not from displeasure or resentment; but voluntarily incur the odium of many persons attached by interest and connexions to the universities, with no other motive than the desire of removing the disgrace of those noble establishments, by exposing the futility of the exercises to public animadversion.

The youth whose heart pants for the honour of a Bachelor of Arts' degree must wait patiently till near four years have revolved. But this time is not to be spent idly. No; he is obliged, during this period, once to oppose, and once to respond, in disputations held in the public schools—a formidable sound, and a dreadful idea; but, on closer attention, the fear will vanish, and contempt supply its place.

This opposing and responding is termed, in the cant of the place, *doing generals*. Two boys, or men, as they call themselves, agree to do generals together. The first step in this mighty work is to procure arguments. These are always handed down, from generation to generation, on long slips of paper, and consist of foolish syllogisms on foolish subjects, of the formation or the signification of which the respondent and opponent seldom know more than an infant in swaddling-clothes. The next step is to go for a *liceat* to one of the petty officers, called the Regent Master of the Schools, who subscribes his name to the questions, and receives sixpence as his fee. When the important day arrives, the two doughty disputants go into a large dusty room full of dirt and cobwebs, with walls

and wainscot decorated with the names of former disputants, who, to divert the tedious hours, cut out their names with their pen-knives, or wrote verses with a pencil. Here they sit in mean desks, opposite to each other, from one o'clock till three. Not once in a hundred times does any university officer enter; and, when he does, he hears one syllogism or two, and then makes a bow, and departs, as he came and remained, in solemn silence. The disputants then return to the amusement of cutting the desks, carving their names, or reading Sterne's Sentimental Journey, or some other edifying novel. When this exercise is duly performed by both parties, they have a right to the title and insignia of Sophs; but not before they have been formally created by one of the regent-masters, before whom they kneel, while he lays a volume of Aristotle's works on their heads, and puts on a hood, a piece of black crape, hanging from their necks down to their heels; which crape, it is expressly ordained by a statute in this case made and provided, shall be plain, and unadorned either with wool or with fur.

The next exercise is called *doing juraments*, which consists of just stepping into the school, and proposing one syllogism, for the sake of complying with the letter of the statute; and this noble exercise is termed doing juraments, which, being interpreted, signifies the evading of one's oath.

This work once done, a great progress is made towards the wished-for honour of a bachelor's degree. There remain only one or two trifling forms, and another disputation almost exactly similar to doing generals, but called *answering under bachelor*, previous to the awful examination.

Every candidate is obliged to be examined in the whole circle of the sciences by three masters of arts, of his own choice. The examination is to be holden in

ne of the public schools, and to continue from nine 'clock till eleven. The masters take a most solemn ath, that they will examine properly and impartially. Dreadful as all this appears, there is always found to e more of appearance in it than reality; for the reatest dunce usually gets his *testimonium* signed with s much ease and credit as the finest genius. The nanner of proceeding is as follows: The poor young nan to be examined in the sciences often knows no nore of them than his bed-maker, and the masters vho examine are sometimes equally unacquainted with uch mysteries. But *schemes*, as they are called, or ittle books, containing forty or fifty questions in each cience, are handed down from age to age, from one to nother. The candidate to be examined employs three r four days in learning these by heart, and the exniners, having done the same before him when they vere examined, know what questions to ask; and so ll goes on smoothly. When the candidate has displayed his universal knowledge of the sciences, he is to lisplay his skill in philology. One of the masters, herefore, desires him to construe a passage in some Greek or Latin classic, which he does with no interruption, just as he pleases, and as well as he can. The statutes next require, that he should translate familiar English phrases into Latin. And now is the time when the masters shew their wit and jocularity. Droll questions are put on any subject, and the puzzled candidate furnishes diversion by his awkward embarrassment. I have known the questions on this occasion to consist of an inquiry into the pedigree of a race-horse. And it is a common question, after asking what is the *summum bonum* of various sects of philosophers, to ask what is the *summum bonum*, or chief good, among Oxonians; to which the answer is such as Mimnermus would give. This familiarity, however, only takes

place when the examiners are pot-companions of the candidate, which, indeed, is usually the case; for it is reckoned good management to get acquainted with two or three jolly young masters of arts, and supply them well with port, previously to the examination. If the vice-chancellor and proctors happen to enter the school, a very uncommon event, then a little solemnity is put on, very much to the confusion of the masters as well as of the boy, who is sitting in the little box opposite to them. As neither the officer, nor any one else, usually enters the room (for it is reckoned very ungenteel), the examiners and the candidates often converse on the last drinking-bout, or on horses, or read the newspaper, or a novel, or divert themselves as well as they can in any manner, till the clock strikes eleven, when all parties descend, and the *testimonium* is signed by the masters. With this *testimonium* in his possession, the candidate is sure of success. The day in which the honour is to be conferred arrives; he appears in the Convocation-house, he takes an abundance of oaths, pays a sum of money in fees, and, after kneeling down before the vice-chancellor, and whispering a lie, rises up a Bachelor of Arts!

And now, if he aspires at higher honours, (and what emulous spirit can sit down without aspiring to them?) new labours and new difficulties are to be encountered during the space of three years. He must *determine* in Lent, he must *do quodlibets*, he must *do austins*, he must declaim twice, he must read six solemn lectures, and he must be again examined in the sciences, before he can be promoted to the degree of Master of Arts.

None but the initiated can know what determining, doing quodlibets, and doing austins, mean. I have not room to enter into a minute description of such contemptible minutiæ. Let it be sufficient to say, that

these exercises consist of disputations, and the disputations of syllogisms, procured and uttered nearly in the same places, time, and manner, as we have already seen them in doing generals. There is, however, a great deal of trouble in little formalities, such as procuring sixpenny liceats, sticking up the names on the walls, sitting in large empty rooms by yourself, or with some poor wight as ill employed as yourself, without any thing to say or do; wearing hoods, and a little piece of lamb-skin with the wool on it; and a variety of other particulars too tedious and too trifling to be worthy of enumeration.

The declamations would be useful exercises, if they were not always performed in a careless and evasive manner. The lectures are always called Wall Lectures, because the lecturer has no other audience but the walls. Indeed, he usually steals a sheet or two of Latin out of some old book, no matter on what subject, though it ought to be on natural philosophy. These he keeps in his pocket, in order to take them out and read away, if a proctor should come in; but, otherwise, he sits by himself, and solaces himself, if he pleases, with a book, not from the Bodleian but the circulating library.

The examination is performed exactly in the same manner as before described; and though represented as very formidable, is such an one as a boy from a good school just entered may go through as well as after a seven years' residence. Few, however, reside; for the majority are what are called *term-trotters*, that is, persons who only keep the terms for form-sake, or spend six or eight weeks in a year in the university to qualify them for degrees, according to the letter of the statutes.

After all these important exercises and trials, and after again taking oaths by wholesale, and payingthe

fees, the academic is honoured with a Master's degree, and sallies forth into the world with this undeniable passport to carry him through it with credit.

Exercises of a nature equally silly and obsolete are performed, in a similar manner, for the other degrees; but I have neither time nor patience to enter into the detail.

And now I seriously repeat, that what I have said proceeds from no other motive than a wish to see the glory of the universities unsullied by the disgrace of requiring, with ridiculous solemnity, a set of childish and useless exercises. They raise no emulation, they confer no honour, they promote no improvement. They give a great deal of trouble, they waste much time, and they render the university contemptible to its own members. I have the honour, such as it is, to be a member of the university of Oxford, and a master of arts in it. I know the advantages of the place; but I also know its more numerous and weighty disadvantages; and the confidence the public has already placed in me, makes it a duty to inform them of every thing in which the general state of morals and literature is greatly concerned. I have done this duty; nor shall I regard the unjust displeasure of all the doctors, both the proctors, nor of all the heads of colleges and halls, with their respective societies.

"As to the imprudence of this undertaking," to use the words of an able but unfortunate writer, Amhurst, "I confess it to be such, and that I have all along proceeded without a single view to my own interest, without any promise or expectation of the smallest reward, even that of being presented to a doctor's degree by the university, in return for all my industry, and the pains which I have taken in its behalf.

"The worldly wise, and the prudent of this generation, consider things only as they respect ther tem-

poral interest and advantage, without any regard to right or wrong, truth or falsehood, any farther than they conduce to their corrupt purposes and selfish aims. But it is the part of a scholar and an honest man to consider things intrinsically, and to make truth, reason, and equity, the standards of all his determinations."

[It is justice to add, that since the above essay was written, in the warm zeal which a young mind felt for the honour of the universities, several important reforms have taken place at Oxford. I claim no merit in the alteration: I merely mention the fact. Let others bestow the praise where the praise is due.

Many, indeed, have been partial enough to attribute the late reform at Oxford in some degree to this paper, and to others on similar topics in a book entitled Liberal Education. I rejoice at the reform, though it is by no means complete. As to the praise—DEO OPTIMO MAXIMO SIT OMNIS LAUS ET GLORIA.]

No. LXXVIII.

ON THE FEAR OF GROWING OLD.

AMONG the various follies by which we increase the natural and unavoidable miseries of life, is the dread of approaching age. The sight of a gray hair has often caused a severer pang than the loss of a child or a husband. After a certain age, every returning birth-day is saluted with silent sorrow, and we conceal the number of our years with as much solicitude as the consciousness of an atrocious crime.

This weakness arises, in a great measure, from a defective education. They who had never been taught to consider any thing valuable but youth, beauty, and the pleasures of dissipation, will naturally feel themselves reduced to a state of despondency when they

behold all for which life appears worth possessing on the eve of departure. That middle age, at which all powers of the mind and body are in complete perfection, is loathed as if it were the age of decrepitude. The boundaries of life, by nature sufficiently circumscribed, are still farther contracted by the empty votary of fashion; and from threescore and ten it shrinks to thirty. It has been currently reported, that many fashionable beauties have expressed a devout wish, that they might not survive their thirtieth birth-day. To sink in the horizon of the gay world, and to see other suns soaring in all the glorious majesty of youth and beauty, was more than they imagined their delicate natures could possibly sustain.

But as life is sweet, and death not always exorable, they and their many imitators will probably be inclined to live on, even when they are arrived at the formidable age of thrice ten years. It will, then, be but common charity to endeavour to convince them, that there are methods which may render the long and dismal period which is to follow not only comfortable to themselves, but agreeable to others. They will not any longer be under the necessity of dressing at sixty in the garb of sixteen, nor of painting and patching a shrivelled skin, nor of spending that time at the looking-glass which should be devoted to the mirror and the beauty of holiness.

For the enjoyment of the space from thirty to threescore, it will be necessary to have laid in a stock of good humour. But the temper must be cultivated at an early age, in order to be cultivated with success. The years from eight to eighteen must not be exclusively devoted to external ornament, and the arts of catching admiration. Many efforts must be made during this period, to overcome spite, envy, peevishness, stubbornness, sullenness, and all those ugly qualities,

which, though they may lie dormant while youth and beauty secure submission, will afterwards break out in all the fulness of their horrors, when flattery is silent, and admiration no more. But good humour, duly cherished, will rise to supply the charms of departed beauty; and good sense, properly improved, will leave no part of life without the means of pleasing and receiving pleasure.

There is no method of inspiring good humour and good sense so effectual as that of forming a taste for polite letters and polite arts at an early age. EMOLLIT MORES. Whatever pleases habitually, equably, and innocently, cannot fail to sweeten the temper. Books, besides that they are usually addressed to the taste, and on that account possess a beneficial influence on the temper, abound with maxims and with precepts of sovereign efficacy in the improvement of the heart, the temper, and the understanding. Drawing and music, seriously and attentively pursued, are peculiarly efficacious in refining, exalting, and sweetening the disposition. Every thing, indeed, which addresses itself to the finer faculties of the human constitution, has, in some degree, this valuable effect; and she who has been early taught to value the beauties of the mind, will find its graces expanding to their highest perfection at the very age in which the blossoms of personal beauty wither and decay.

If, as we grow old, we grow wiser and better, surely we shall have no reason to repine, since our real happiness is always proportioned to our wisdom and our goodness; and we can scarcely avoid growing wiser and better by age, if our minds have been early improved with learning, and duly tinctured with virtue and religion. Time and experience naturally lead to improvement; and, if our hearts are rightly disposed, we shall find in the conscious improvement of our minds

and morals one of the sweetest pleasures of which our nature is capable.

However unreasonable the excessive dread of approaching old age in either sex, it is certainly more excusable on many accounts, in women than in men. In men it is a mark of weakness, want of principle, and want of sense. Yet how many do we daily see with wrinkled brows and bloodless cheeks, and tottering legs and hoary locks, decorating their walking skeletons with cosmetic arts, and haunting every scene of vice and vanity with all the wantonness of a stripling of eighteen! There is a natural dignity, authority, and beauty, in old age, honourably supported, which such men resign for that absurd affectation of youth which can only render them wretched and ridiculous.

To consider the advanced periods of life as of no value, argues a great defect of religious principle. They constitute the proper season for the pleasures of devotion and of practical piety. They furnish a most desirable opportunity for advancing our nature to all attainable perfection, and fulfilling the best purposes of our existence. They enable us to aspire after and to obtain that beauty which shall not pass away, and that youth which shall be immortal.

No. LXXIX.

CURSORY CONSIDERATIONS ON ARCHITECTURE.

THE origin of building was but little posterior to the origin of mankind. Man, naked and defenceless as he came from the hand of nature, soon found it necessary to shelter himself from the inclemency of the weather, from the attacks of wild beasts, and from the invasion of his savage neighbours. He could not lie down to sleep with security till he had formed a hut, which, however rude and inartificial, might serve the purposes of shelter and defence. If his own wants

and natural ingenuity were not sufficient to instruct him how to build, he might learn from the irrational creation. The swallow's nest, and the bee's hive, suggested hints which he might adopt and improve; but this original species of building, directed by no rules, and destitute of elegance and proportion, cannot properly be said to be the work of art, or to merit the appellation of Architecture. It was, however, the embryo of those noble edifices which have since adorned all civilised countries.

To the first great works of architecture, Ægypt, ever fertile in the productions of art as well as of nature, is recorded to have given rise. Several of them are extant at this day, and are too generally known to admit of reiterated description. They excite those ideas which arise from magnificence of design, not from delicacy or elegance; and they rather astonish by their grandeur than please by their beauty.

But the taste for works of useless bulk and unwieldy magnitude could not long prevail. Some adequate end was required to justify labour and expense. It is natural to suppose, and the event has verified the conjecture, that some of the earliest efforts of the art would be devoted to religion. The pyramids of Ægypt are, indeed, with great probability, supposed by Mr. Bryant, to have been temples. The magnificence of the temple was well adapted to excite sublime ideas of the Deity; and it seems to have been an early received opinion, that the greatest human skill and industry could not be more properly exerted than to display the glory of Omnipotence.

From the temples of the gods, to palaces and public edifices, designed for general debate, and for judicial and legislative transactions, the transition was easy and gradual. Even in the dwellings of private persons, the art was displayed with minute elegance as well as magnificent splendour. As wealth accumulated, and the arts

improved, it was natural to add to the original objects of building, which were convenience and safety, some degree of ornament. When the few wants of nature are satisfied, and the dangers of a savage state removed, the restless mind of man creates artificial objects of desire. No sooner are the cravings of necessity silenced, than the calls of imagination gain attention. Taste becomes importunate when the animal appetites are at rest. At an advanced period of society, it was not enough that the habitation was large, strong, and durable: it was now required to be not only safe and commodious, but ornamental. Men of liberal and elegant minds, whose education, genius, and possessions, enabled them either to design or execute, soon devoted themselves to the study of that symmetry, and form of beauty, which excites pleasing sensations in the mind of man.

Persons of this turn, and under circumstances favourable to its exertion, were, however, in the early ages, but thinly scattered on the face of the globe. A just taste in architecture was confined, at one time, to the comparatively small country of ancient Greece, The greater part of mankind continued long in a state of barbarism, and consequent insecurity, most unfavourable to the progress of elegance and refinement: but the inhabitants of ancient Greece, formed, perhaps, by the partial hand of nature with feelings peculiarly susceptible of every kind of beauty, very early advanced the art of building to a degree of perfection which the united intellects of all the civilised world have not since been able to surpass. Men have indeed, sometimes ventured, from motives of vanity or caprice, to deviate from these models; but have commonly returned to them soon, with a clear conviction of having lost sight of excellence in the pursuit of innovation.

Perfection has commonly followed invention at a

long interval; and the best productions of art have seldom been universally, and without exception, well received: but the orders of architecture, invented by the Greeks, have never admitted real improvement by alteration; nor have they yet been beheld with disgust or disapprobation by a single individual. Fanciful changes in the capital of a column, or in trifling embellishments, have, indeed, frequently been adopted; but though they might please the vanity of the artist, and be applauded by his partial admirers, yet have they seldom given satisfaction to the majority of spectators. Ignorance and dulness may have viewed the Grecian architecture with an indifference easily accounted for; but every sensible mind, though unacquainted with rules, and free from favourable prepossessions, feels itself involuntarily soothed and elevated by the contemplation of it. Profusion of ornament, and complicated vastness, have never yet been able to cause that effect which is produced by SIMPLE MAGNIFICENCE. What is said of the Grecian architecture is to be extended to those additions which the Romans made, so similar to the primitive productions of Greece, that I do not separate them as constituting different styles, but class them, for the sake of simplicity, under one denomination.

Such, then, is the general characteristic of Grecian architecture, which, though it originally displayed that kind of beauty which seems, from the universality of its influence, congenial to the human mind, has been, at various times, lost by disuse, corrupted by vicious taste, and mutilated by ignorance. To trace it in the progress of its revolutions, and to treat with technical accuracy of the dimensions and particular modes of alteration, would be to invade the province of the architect and historian. It were to enter upon a detail jejune and uninteresting. I pretend not presumptu-

ously to compose a didactic treatise, or a historical dissertation on the subject, but endeavour to express the feelings of an elegant though common spectator.

During that period of literary darkness which overspread all the nations of Europe, the ancient arts, from their intimate connexion with ancient learning, seem to have been involved in the general obscurity. Still, however, edifices for religious, for civil, for domestic purposes, were necessary; and the human mind, active even under disadvantageous circumstances, invented orders of architecture of which there existed no ancient model in Greece or Rome. Of these the learned antiquary is able to discriminate the specific differences, and to point out with accuracy the Gothic, the Saracenic, and other styles, with all their temporary modifications. The general spectator, however, includes them all under the name of Gothic architecture; and, indeed, the great resemblance between them in many of their most striking features, and the common notions on the subject, in some measure justify the considering them as of the same tribe, accidentally diversified by that analogous irregularity, if we may so express it, which is often visible in the works of art as well as of nature.

The many venerable monuments which remain in our own country to testify the magnificence of our ancestors, enable every one to form an idea of the Gothic style from actual observation; and it must be confessed, that they bear evident marks of great skill, great labour, and great expense. Taste, since the builders of those times made little pretension to what is called a pure taste, and had few opportunities for its improvement, is not to be looked for in their works, and will, indeed, seldom be found. To the perfection of a building they seem at one time to have thought it necessary to exhibit the appearance of great manual

labour in little decorations, and to dazzle the eye with gilding, sculpture, paint, and finery; a style which is called the florid, by those writers who have undertaken to discriminate with accuracy the various species of Gothic architecture. That any part could be great from its simplicity, and beautiful from its want of ornament, our ancestors had little apprehension: they had neither the models of classic antiquity before their eyes, nor the treatises of those philosophers at hand who have investigated the true causes of beauty and sublimity. No wonder, therefore, that the mason and the mechanic were suffered to display their dexterity in fanciful and capricious exertions. Difficulty of execution, and the appearance of uncommon labour, were often the only criterions of excellence with the spectator, as well as with the artist, at a time when neither of them had opportunities of cultivating a refined taste, or of forming a solid judgment, either by precept or by example.

But the modern spectator has unavoidably become familiar with the Greek model, and, without any great effort, if he is not deficient in natural taste, acquires rules of judging of the fine arts according to truth and simplicity. On entering the Gothic abbey or the hall, he is indeed struck with ideas of solemnity, and is conscious of a gloomy grandeur. The fretted roof, the long-drawn aisle, the pointed arch, and the dim twilight from the narrow window, excite a species of emotions peculiarly adapted to the purposes of the cathedral. Perhaps, however, the air of antiquity which the Gothic piles of building have by this time acquired has at least an equal share in producing this effect on the observer. When he views the abbey merely as a work of architecture, without admitting religious or historical associations, and without indulging the prejudices of the antiquary, perhaps he no

longer feels himself affected with delight, or particularly disposed to devotion. When he looks up without prejudice, he owns that, however extensive the area and vast the structure, his attention is drawn off from contemplating the grandeur of the whole by a profusion of little ornaments, whose angles offend the eye, and which destroy the unity of the object. A great multiplicity of ideas cannot severally make a due impression, and produce a proper effect, when they operate in conjunction. While we survey the complicated parts, we neglect the whole; and while we attend to the whole by abstracting the parts, which is neither an easy nor an agreeable effort, those lavish ornaments, of which the complicated parts consist, become indifferent or disgusting, because useless, superfluous, and cumbersome. Instead of causing agreeable sensations, which ought to be a subordinate object in every building for public use, such edifices are found to raise ideas in some degree painful, from the distraction of mind which they occasion. Meanness is often the result where sublimity was expected, and littleness appears even in the midst of grandeur.

Gothic architecture is often found disgusting at present, from a disproportion or inconsistency, which, perhaps, originally pleased. A long and slender pillar sometimes apparently supports a weight which seems too great for it to bear. This want of symmetry renders an object highly deformed, which probably, by the appearance of extraordinary skill, delighted our ancestors. The pointed arch, which, because we have always seen it used in buildings venerable for age and sanctity, we have learned to think peculiarly solemn, is certainly in itself unpleasing and improper. The awkward angle, in the vertex, stops the rapid course of the eye, which loves to pursue the line of a circle or semicircle without obstruction. Nor let the satisfaction

which is sometimes experienced from a view of it be thought an unanswerable objection to the general justness of this remark; for pleasing ideas, associated with objects unpleasing, will often communicate their agreeable tinge by approximation, and render even deformity no longer ungraceful. A view of the Gothic arch, in the antique pile raised by our progenitors, calls to remembrance the generations that have preceded us, renews the idea of some historical fact or celebrated personage, or suggests reflections on the piety, the zeal, the comparative ingenuity of our forefathers; and, on the whole, raises thoughts pleasingly awful on the sanctity of the time-honoured edifice. All or any of these arbitrary associations will give an agreeable air to an object which might otherwise be contemplated with indifference or disgust.

The painted window, a striking ornament of our ancient edifices, exhibits a specimen by which we may form a judgment of the general turn of that taste which dictated every other decoration. Glaring colours, rendered still more glaring by transparency, seem to have constituted, in the idea of those who lived a century or two ago, the perfection of beauty. Accordingly, they viewed, with a pleasure uncontrolled by the chaste notions of modern elegance, the gaudy shrine, the glittering altar, the painted monument, and the emblazoned ceiling. Exactness of representation, and a faithful adherence to nature and propriety, were, indeed, wanting; but their place was amply supplied, in the ideas of the dark ages, by the glare of dazzling splendour. Perhaps it may be justly questioned whether the genuine graces of unadorned nature were at all pleasing to eyes accustomed to admire all that was laborious and artificial. The Medicean Venus would probably have had few charms till dressed like the lady of Loretto. The meretricious staining of the glass was

commonly preferred so the chaste colouring of the canvass. Such, indeed, is the general preference where refinement is unknown; and there is no doubt but that an Indian would set a higher value on the Dutch toy that glitters, and awkwardly imitates the human shape, than on the statue of a Phidias, or on the painting of an Apelles. No wonder that our ancestors, at a period when they neither studied nature nor the ancients, displayed in the works of art the characteristic grossness of barbarism. Finery strikes immediately on the perceptive faculties; and a very considerable degree of civilisation must have taken place before the first strong decision of the senses can be superseded by the dictates of a critical delicacy.

The parts of a building which add to its strength, ought, whenever it is practicable, to contribute to its beauty. The vast buttresses of the Gothic architecture, supposing that they were necessary to support, which however they were not always, are seldom thought at present to conduce to ornament: but that they were sometimes intended to adorn, we may conclude from their being applied where, as supports, they are superfluous. And indeed, considered in this light, they are perfectly consistent with that general taste which seems to have delighted in supernumerary appendages, provided they conveyed the idea of great labour or difficulty. In the castle, and the fortified wall, they are, indeed, always admitted with good effect, because they add to the appearance of security as well as to real strength; but, in edifices consecrated to religion and the arts of peace, they occasion that disgust to true taste which results from the misapplication of supports and embellishments. Nor are they of themselves in the least beautiful. They want the rotundity of the column, and the uprightness of the pilaster, and abound with unpleasing angles.

The internal supports are often no less heavy and inelegant. Even where there appears a great resemblance to Grecian architecture, we find no vestiges of Grecian grace. The pillars are preposterously thick, and want the due height to render them pleasing to the eye. The bases, the shafts and the capitals, are joined together without symmetry, and seem not to have been considered by the artists as forming one whole, which, when proportionate, constitutes an object that never yet failed to please. Most of the artists, it is probable, knew not, in an unenlightened age, the difference between the orders; and by blending them capriciously together, or by omitting some of their essential parts, formed, indeed, a column not quite unlike the Grecian, but too much disguised and deformed to be recognised among the orders of antiquity. The ornaments of the capitals are whimsical and ugly. The architrave, the frieze, and the cornice, are preserved in a mutilated, fantastic, and irregular form. Under these disadvantages, what little there is of the Grecian architecture yields in beauty to the Gothic, when the Gothic appears in its best style, genuine and unmixed. The mixture of the two styles in the same building, which is not uncommon, never has a good effect; since the Gothic spoils the uniformity of the Grecian, and the Grecian renders the Gothic more conspicuously inelegant by the contrast of its own beauty.

The darkness remarkable in religious buildings of this style has been admired as an excellence. It is said to throw the mind into that serious temper which is peculiarly adapted to the indulgence of devotion. Such an effect it may perhaps produce, in a great degree, on minds subject to superstition and fanaticism, or strongly influenced by a warm imagination; yet, why light, one of the most glorious works of creation,

should cool the ardour of religion in the rational and dispassionate professor of it, no good reason can be assigned. The imaginations of all men, are, however, affected by very trivial causes; and he knows little of human nature, who knows not the power of the imagination over the strongest understanding. But it is the business of philosophy to assert the empire of reason over fancy. A religious dimness may, perhaps, be deemed necessary by the bigoted inhabitants of the convent and the cloister, whose minds, it is to be feared, are often as dark as their habitations: but light is cheerful, and cheerfulness is the disposition of innocence. If guilt is to be taught to feel contrition by the gloominess of the temple, it is to be presumed that the pious sorrow will be as transient as the emotion which caused it, and which, like other productions of the fancy, must be of short continuance. That our predecessors had no such end in view we may conclude, because the small contracted window is not appropriated to the church, but is often observed in the Gothic hall, palace, and private mansion. We may fairly infer, that the fashion took its rise from a defect in taste and judgment, not from a conviction of its peculiar propriety in religious houses; or, perhaps, the aperture was made small because glass was scarce in the early ages, and a large opening admitted the inclemency of the weather: but whatever was the cause, one is almost tempted to say, that it was a proof of uncommon narrowness of mind, to be sparing of that light which the Author of nature appears to have bestowed with a liberality almost unbounded, like his power.

But, in truth, while we censure the contracted taste, we must applaud the enlarged benevolence and unaffected piety of our forefathers. The numerous buildings which they consecrated to learning, however uncouth their appearance, have afforded retreats and

ortunities of improvement to men who have been nce the ornaments of our nation and of mankind. r were the alms-house, and the hospital, less capable dministering comfort and relief to the needy and rm, because built with little grace or symmetry: l the pious heart has poured forth its animated de- ion at the rude Gothic shrine with a fervour not to surpassed in the Grecian temple. The taste of ancestors is, indeed, no longer a pattern for our n; but their beneficent virtues will for ever continue per objects of imitation.

The revival of ancient literature was soon followed the revival of true taste. The latter was a natural sequence of the former. By an acquaintance with ks the mind was opened, the views enlarged, and iosity excited. Travelling into foreign countries, the purposes of improvement, as well as of war l commerce, became a general practice, and was ilitated by the liberal spirit of inquiry which began versally to prevail. Our artists no sooner saw the ecian and Roman remains of architecture, than they ght the idea of beauty, which they realised at their urn. The new style of building, as the ancient, at revival after lying dormant many ages, might be led, was immediately compared with that which n prevailed, and was preferred to it with intuitive cernment. It wanted only to be seen, to be admired l adopted.

And, indeed, its beauties are of so peculiar a kind, as strike and please even the uncultivated mind. Like fabric of the universe, it derives much of its gran- ar from its simplicity. Its ornaments are chaste, gant, captivating, and never superfluous. They are rposely contrived to wear the appearance of utility, l often really contribute to support as well as to orn. Many of the most essential parts are, from

their shape and proportion, as beautiful as those specifically termed ornamental. The column of each order, with all its appendages, and the semicircular or elliptical arch without a pointed vertex, seem to have something inherent in the form of them capable of giving pleasure to the mind, previously to the direction of rules and the disquisitions of criticism.

The passion for novelty and singularity is, however, often found to prefer the new and uncommon, even to allowed and established excellence; and for the gratification of this inborn avidity of human nature, absurdities long exploded and relinquished are often revived, and fanciful and monstrous innovations introduced. It is not therefore surprising, however culpable, that, in opposition to the general taste of mankind, many still admire and labour to restore the Gothic architecture; or that, tired of Grecian beauty, they endeavour to import into northern climates a style which they call oriential, but which is often mixed and modified with their own grotesque or puerile inventions. Ingenuity of design, skill in execution, and rarity of appearance, may cause even buildings of this fantastic form to excite a transient pleasure among the curious or the uninformed; but it is to be hoped that the general depravity of taste which can render them objects of general approbation will not soon take place. What were this but a preference of darkness to light, of deformity to beauty, of barbarism to refinement?

Of a revolution so fatal to the fine arts, there is, indeed, little danger. The standard of taste, that great desideratum in many of the works of human ingenuity, seems to be discovered and established in architecture. The caprice of a few individuals cannot alter it. Nor is it likely to be lost, till the same darkness which once overspread ancient Greece and Rome

shall involve all modern Europe; an event too improbable to be apprehended, but by the visionary.

To please the eye has, in later times, become a collateral object in the building designed for private habitation, as it ever was in erecting the palace, the senate-house, and the temple: and though the modern methods of multiplying the works of original artists by substituting stucco for stone, by casting in moulds the ornaments which were wont to be wrought by the chisel, and by using gilding for real gold, have rendered the Grecian and the florid style common in buildings intended for mean purposes; yet, however misplaced and prostituted, the Grecian manner will ever retain intrinsic beauty, and ought not to be less esteemed when it is displayed in its proper place by the ingenious architect.

With many such, and their judicious admirers, this nation is and has been honoured. It were easy to name those who would adorn the schools of Greece and of ancient and modern Italy; but it is totally unnecessary. Their sagacious fellow-citizens have marked their merit; and their own works will be a monument of their fame to late posterity.

By the efforts of these artists, conducted according to the most graceful taste, the face of our country is daily acquiring new beauty. Grace without use and solidity is, indeed, of little permanent value, but when united with these, it commands, by deserving, universal applause and esteem. While in the present age we behold numerous and beautiful edifices arising on all sides, devoted to the purposes of religion, of benevolence, of learning, and of liberal enjoyment, we may justly congratulate our own nation, that the happy art is discovered and practised of combining elegance with convenience, and rendering ornament conducive to accommodation, and accommodation to ornament.

No. LXXX.

A SHORT SYSTEM OF VIRTUE AND HAPPINESS.

I WILL suppose a virtuous young man forming in his mind the principles of his future conduct, and uttering the result of his reflections in the following soliloquy:—

"At the age when I am approaching to maturity of reason, I perceive myself placed in a world abounding with external objects; and I also perceive within me faculties and passions formed to be powerfully excited and affected by them. I am naturally tempted to interrogate myself, What am I? whence came I? and whither am I going?

"With a view to satisfy my own inquiries, I consider others who appear to be just like myself; I listen to the instruction of those who have obtained a reputation for wisdom; and I examine, with serious attention, the volumes in which are written the words of the wise.

"The result of the whole inquiry is a sincere conviction that I am placed here to perform many duties; that I originate from a supreme Creator; and that I am going on in the journey of life, to accomplish some of his gracious purposes at the close of it, as well as in its progress.

"I divide my duty into three parts, according to the suggestions of my own reason and the instruction of books. They consist of the obligations which I owe to myself, to others, and to Him in whose hands are both they and I, the great Lord of the universe.

"With respect to myself, as I consist of two parts, a body and a mind, my duty to myself again separates itself into two correspondent subdivisions. My body is a machine curiously organized, and easily deranged by excess and irregularity. When disturbed in its economy, it subjects me to pain, and disables me from all necessary and pleasant exertion. I owe it, therefore, to myself, to taste the cup, and partake the

banquet, and gratify all my senses, no farther than those limits which are obviously prescribed by reason and experience. I further learn from the religion of my country, that my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Viewed in this light, to pollute it with sensual sin, cannot but be blasphemy; to devote myself, then, to gluttony, drunkenness, and debauchery, is at once to deaden the growing energies of spiritual life, and to weaken and destroy the subordinate yet necessary parts of me, my animal and material fabric; it is to shorten life, and to disable me from performing the duties of life, while life continues.

"But I have a mind as well as a body, a mind capable of rising to high improvements by culture, and of sinking to a brutal stupidity by neglect. I will make use of all the advantages of education. I will devote my hours of leisure to reading and reflection. Elegant letters, as well as useful science, shall claim my attention; for all that tends to polish the mind, tends also to sweeten the temper, and to mitigate the remains of natural ferocity.

"My mind, as well as my body, is greatly concerned in avoiding intemperance. Eating to excess clouds its brightness, blunts its edge, and drags it down to all the grossness of a material substance. Intemperate drinking not only reduces it at the time of its immediate influence to a state of brutality, but gradually destroys its vigour. The sensual indulgences in general, when they are inordinate and excessive, debase, corrupt, and brutalize the rational soul. Their delights are transient, their pains severe, and of long duration.

"Instead, then, of running into the danger of temptation during the ardour of my youth, I will fly from the conflict in which my own passions are sure to fight against me, and will probably betray me to the enemy.

I see, indeed, thousands pursuing pleasure, and professing to have found it in perfection in the haunts of debauchery. But I see them but for a little while. Like the silly insect that flutters with delight around the taper, they soon receive some fatal injury in their minds, their persons, or their fortunes, and drop in irrecoverable ruin. I am too much inclined to vice, from the depravity of my nature, and the violence of my passions. I will not add fuel to the fire, nor increase the violence of that natural tempest within me, which of itself is sufficient to accomplish my destruction.

"But, at the same time, I will not be a cynic.—The world abounds with innocent enjoyments. The kind God of nature, it is evident, from their existence, and from the capacities I possess, intended that I should taste them. But moderation is essential to true pleasure. My own experience, and the experience of mankind from their origin, has declared that whenever pleasure exceeds the bounds of moderation, it is not only highly injurious, but soon becomes disgustful. In order to enjoy pleasure, I see the necessity of pursuing some business with attention. The vicissitude is necessary to excite an appetite and give a relish. Nay the very performance of creditable and useful business, with skill and success, is attended with a delightful satisfaction, which few of the most boasted pleasures are able to confer.

"While I take care of myself, of my health, of my improvement in morals and understanding, I will not harbour pride, or look down with superciliousness or ill-nature on those who live, as it were, at random, and who acknowledge no other guide of their conduct but the sudden impulse of a temporary inclination. With all my improvements and endeavours, I shall still feel imperfections enough to humble me. Candour and humility are some of the least fallible marks of sound

sense and sincere virtue. I shall have sufficient employment in correcting myself; nor shall I presume to censure others, unless my profession or relative situation renders it my duty.

"My duty to myself is, indeed, intimately connected with my duty to others. By preserving the faculties of my mind and body, and by improving them to the utmost, I am enabled to exert them with effect in the service of society.

"I am connected with others by the ties of consanguinity and friendship, and by the common bond of partaking in the same humanity. As a son, I shall be tender and dutiful; as a brother, zealously and uniformly kind; as a husband, faithful, tender, and affectionate; as a father, gentle and provident; as a man, benevolent to men in whatever circumstances, and however separated from me by country, religion, or government.

"But universal benevolence must not be an inactive principle. If it proceed not to real beneficence, from sentiment to actions, I fear it will have more in it of ostentation than of sincerity. I will, then, prove its sincerity by doing good, and removing evil of every kind, as far as my abilities allow me, as my influence extends, and opportunities are offered.

"But before I pretend to generosity, I will be strictly just. Truth shall regulate my words, and equity my actions. If I am engaged in a profession, I will do the duties of it; if in merchandise, I will take no advantage of the ignorant, nor debase my character, nor wound my conscience, for the sake of lucre. In all my intercourse with society, I will recollect that heavenly precept, of doing to others as I wish they should to me, and will endeavour to obey it. I may, I certainly shall, offend from the violence of my passions, the weakness of my judgment, the perverse-

ness of my will, and from mistake and misapprehension. But while I keep the evangelical rule in view, and sincerely labour to conform to it, I shall seldom commit such offences against others as will be either permanently or deeply injurious.

" With respect to my duty to my Creator, I derive an argument in favour of religion from the feelings of my own bosom, superior to the most elaborate subtilties of human ingenuity. In the hour of distress, my heart as naturally flies for succour to the Deity, as, when hungry and thirsty, I seek food and water, or, when weary, repose. In religion I look for comfort, and in religion I always find it. Devotion supplies me with a pure and exalted pleasure. It elevates my soul, and teaches me to look down with a proper contempt upon many objects which are eagerly sought, but which end in misery. In this respect, and in many others, it effects, in the best and most compendious method, what has been in vain pretended to by proud philosophy.

" And in selecting a mode or peculiar system of religion, I shall consider what that was in which my father lived and died. I find it to have been the religion of Christ. I examine it with reverence. I encounter many difficulties; but, at the same time, I feel within me an internal evidence, which, uniting its force with the external, forbids me to disbelieve. When involuntary doubts arise, I immediately silence their importunity by recollecting the weakness of my judgment, and the vain presumption of hastily deciding on the most important of all subjects, against such powerful evidence, and against the major part of the best and wisest men, in regions of the earth the most illuminated.

" I will learn humility of the humble Jesus, and gratefully accept the beneficial doctrines and glorious

offers which his benign religion reaches out to all who sincerely seek him by prayer and penitence.

"In vain shall the conceited philosophers, whom fashion and ignorance admire, attempt to weaken my belief, or undermine the principles of my morality. Without their aid, I can be sufficiently wicked, and sufficiently miserable. Human life abounds with evil. I will seek balsams for the wounds of the heart in the sweets of innocence, and in the consolations of religion. Virtue, I am convinced, is the noblest ornament of humanity, and the source of the sublimest and the sweetest pleasure; and piety leads to that peace, which the world, and all that it possesses, cannot bestow. Let others enjoy the pride and pleasure of being called philosophers, deists, sceptics; be mine the real, unostentatious qualities of the honest, humble, and charitable Christian. When the gaudy glories of fashion and of vain philosophy shall have withered like a short-lived flower, sincere piety and moral honesty shall flourish as the cedar of Lebanon.

"But I repress my triumphs. After all my improvements, and all my desires of perfection, I shall still be greatly defective. Therefore, to whatever degree of excellence I advance, let me never forget to show to others that indulgence, which my infirmities, my errors, and my voluntary misconduct, will require both from them and from mine and their Almighty and most Merciful Father."

No. LXXXI.

ON THE PECULIAR PROPRIETY OF EXCITING PERSONAL MERIT AND MANLY VIRTUE IN A TIME OF PUBLIC DISTRESS AND DIFFICULTY.

THE dignity and rational happiness of human nature are always proportionate to its real improvements. Moral instruction can never be superfluous or unseasonable; for human virtue, like the stone of Sisy-

phus, has a continual tendency to roll down the hill, and requires to be forced up again by the never-ceasing efforts of succeeding moralists and divines.

But with respect to the influence of virtue on the prosperity of a state, it is certain, that emergencies arise, when extraordinary degrees of it, throughout the whole body of the people, are peculiarly necessary. National adversity, like adversity in private life, prohibits the indulgence of a supine indolence, and calls for the most energetic activity. Virtues which have lain dormant, like arms in the arsenal, during the soft season of peace and plenty, must be brought forth to be, if I may so express it, brightened and sharpened in the day of danger and distress. And, perhaps, no time can demand them more loudly than when the nation is engaged in war with formidable powers, and weakened by internal corruption.

The strength of empire consists in the spirit of its members, and not altogether in its possessions and pecuniary resources. But how is that spirit to be roused or properly directed? The understanding must be enlightened, the ideas elevated, the heart enlarged. Ignorance, avarice, and luxury, render men indifferent under what form of government, or in what state of society, they live. They superinduce a weakness and a meanness, which, for the sake of sensual gratification or sordid interest, rejoice in submitting to the sceptre of tyranny.

Liberty, without which we might almost venture to repine at our existence as an useless and a baneful gift of God, cannot be understood or valued, and consequently will not be duly supported, without a competent share of improvement, moral and intellectual. The vain, the vicious, and the mercenary, seldom extend their cares beyond themselves; and the poor plebeian, though he may vociferate the word Liberty, knows not how

to give it an effectual support. What avails empty breath when opposed to the bayonet or the bullet of a despotical invader? Nothing but a steady, firm, systematic, and unshaken opposition to the encroachments of those to whom fortune has given power and nature an inclination to abuse it, can secure those blessings to our children, for which a Hampden and a Sydney bled. The glorious liberties of an Englishman, such as the right of trial by juries, a participation of the legislature, the freedom of the press, and the privilege of speaking, acting, and thinking, without arbitrary control, are such as render England, in comparison with some neighbouring nations, a terrestrial paradise; but yet they are advantages too remote to affect the sensual and self-interested, and too complicated to be completely understood, or rationally valued, by a gross and uncultivated understanding.

I venture, then, to assert, that the writer who effectually recommends pure morals, manly virtues, and the culture of the intellectual powers, by a liberal and virtuous education, not only serves the cause of learning, morality, and religion, but effects political good of a species the most permanent and substantial. His labours tend to advance the members of his society to all the perfection of which humanity is susceptible. He enlightens their understandings, that they may see the great and solid objects of public good; and he emboldens their hearts to pursue it like men—like men, not such as grovel on the earth in modern Greece and modern Italy, in Asia, Africa, South America; but such as opposed a Xerxes in the straits of Thermopylæ, waged war with a Philip, or put an end to the ambition of a Tarquin and a Cæsar.

The generous love of liberty which warmed the bosoms of a Hampden and a Sydney, was not the mean offspring of envy and malice, nor of a proud and

peevish opposition to the ruling powers, whatever they might be; but it was acquired in the schools of rigid discipline and sublime philosophy. It was accompanied with singular gravity of manners, and dignity of sentiment. Now, let us suppose a nation, in which those who have most influence in its government are become, through a general and fashionable depravity, addicted to sordid interest, to luxury, to vanity, to servility for the sake of emolument; can any thing like the virtue of Leonidas or Brutus subsist in such men? Will they, in an extremity, be ready to sacrifice for the public their estates, their places, their pensions, their expectations, which furnish them with their chief good,—selfish gratifications, the indulgence of voluptuousness or pride?—Will they not rather rejoice to be dependent on a court, which is able to gratify their vanity, supply their pleasures, and reward their meanest submission?

From the most impartial review of history, and from considerations on the nature of man, I am convinced, that good morals and intellectual improvement are essentially necessary to the existence of civil liberty and to the continuance of national prosperity. At a time, then, when both liberty and prosperity are endangered, exhortations to virtue, and every excellence to which an ingenuous nature can aspire, are peculiarly seasonable. They brace the nerves and sinews of the body politic, and enable it to lift its arm in self-defence with irresistible vigour. They add strength to the foundation of empire, so that the assaults of united nations shall not shake the noble fabric.

In this view, and under these circumstances, I cannot help thinking that even my lucubrations may be in some measure useful to my countrymen. It has been my invariable object to enlighten their understandings, to exalt and improve their nature, to ascertain and

vindicate their rights as men and as members of a society, and to teach them to pay no implicit submission but to truth, reason, law, their conscience, and their God.

No LXXXII.

ON THE MEANS OF READING WITH THE MOST ADVANTAGE

It is probable that many students impair their health in a continual course of reading and literary labour, without an adequate return of pleasure or improvement. They read, indeed, because they consider it as a duty, or because they are endeavouring to accomplish themselves for the practice of a profession; but they are ready to confess that the whole tenour of their studies is one continued toil, and that the advantage they derive from them is by no means a recompence for exhausted spirits and habitual melancholy.

With a view to relieve students of this description, who are usually virtuous and laudable characters, I will endeavour to suggest a few hints, which may possibly contribute to render their reading more agreeable and advantageous. But I wish to premise, that in what I now say, and in whatever I have said, in the style of direction and advice, I mean only to offer, not to obtrude; to submit, and not to dictate.

In order to receive the proper advantage from reading, it must be rendered a pleasing employment. Human nature is so constituted, that no practice will be continued long and regularly which is not attended with some degree of pleasure. We enter upon a study which is irksome and disgustful with reluctance; we attend to it superficially, and we relinquish it without reflecting upon it in a degree sufficient for the purpose of improvement. Instead of thinking of it uniformly and steadily, we drive it from our minds as the cause

of uneasiness. But the heart and affections, the imagination and the memory, co-operate with the understanding in deriving all possible advantage from the study which we love.

The first and most important object is, therefore, to form a strong attachment to those parts of science, or to those books, which our judgment or situation directs us to study. There are various methods conducive to this end; but perhaps none are more effectual than that of conversing with men of sense and genius on the books and the subjects which we purpose to examine. There is a warmth and spirit in conversation which renders topics, otherwise cold and lifeless, both interesting and animated. When the company is departed, and the conversation at an end, we are naturally inclined to see what has been said in books on the subjects discussed; and the light let in by the preceding conversation is an excellent introduction and guide to our subsequent inquiries in solitude.

As soon as we have obtained, by reading, a competent knowledge of a book or particular subject, it will contribute greatly to animate us in proceeding still further, if we talk of it either with our equals or inferiors in attainments, or with the learned and experienced. In such conversation we venture to advance an opinion; our self-love renders us solicitous to maintain it. We seek the aid of a book as an auxiliary; we therefore read it with eager attention; and I believe it will be difficult to avoid loving that which we attend to frequently and with eagerness; so that in this manner an attachment to books and literary employments is gradually formed; and what began in labour or necessity becomes choice, and constitutes, as it is found to do in a thousand instances, a most delightful pleasure.

Indeed, if we can once fix our attention very closely

a good book, nothing more will be necessary to make us love it. As in nature, when two substances approach each other very nearly, the attraction of cohesion fastens them together; so when the mind attaches itself closely to any subject whatever, it becomes, at it were, united to it, and gravitates towards it with a spontaneous velocity. There is, indeed, no study so dry, but by fixing our attention upon it, we may at last find it capable of affording great delight. Metaphysics and mathematics, even in their abstrusest parts, are known to give the attentive student a very exalted satisfaction. Those parts, then, of human learning, which in their nature are more entertaining, which address the imagination as well as the intellect, cannot fail of being beloved in a high degree, when the mind is closely and habitually applied to them.

In order to acquire the power and habit of fixing the attention, it will at first be necessary to summon a very considerable degree of resolution. In beginning the study of a new language, or any book or science which presents ideas totally strange, the mind cannot but feel some degree of disgust or reluctance. But let the student persevere, and in a very short time the disgust or reluctance will vanish, and he will be rewarded with high entertainment. Till this takes place, let him make it an inviolable rule, however disagreeable, to read a certain quantity, or for a certain time, and he will infallibly find, that what he entered upon as a task he will continue as a pleasure.

There are many students who spend their days in extracting passages from authors, and fairly transcribing them in their common-place book; a mode of study truly miserable, which seldom repays the student either with profit or delight, which wastes his time, and wears out his eyes and his constitution. I most seriously advise all those who have been led to think

that the exercise of the hand can impress ideas on the brain, who interrupt their attention by copying, who torture themselves in abridging, and who think that by filling their portfolios they shall enrich their understandings, to stop, while they have eyes to see or fingers to write. They have totally mistaken the road to learning; and if they proceed in the way too long a time, they may suffer such injuries in it as shall disable them from returning, or seeking a better. After many years spent in this wretched labour, it is no wonder that they close their books, and make the old complaint of vanity and vexation. Nothing really serves us in reading but what the mind makes its own by reflection and memory. That which is transcribed, and then laid aside, is not in the least more appropriated than when it stood in the printed page. It is an error, if any suppose, that, by the act of marking the words on paper with a pen, the ideas are more clearly marked on the brain than by an attentive and repeated perusal.

The best method of extracting and epitomizing is to express the author's ideas, after shutting his book, in our own words. In this exercise the memory is exerted, and the style improved. We make what we write our own; we think, we are active, and we do not condemn ourselves to an employment merely manual and mechanical. But after all, whatever a few may say, write, or think to the contrary, it is certain that the greatest scholars of past times were content with reading, without making either extracts or epitomes. They were satisfied with what remained in their minds after a diligent perusal, and when they wrote, they wrote their own. Reading is, indeed, most justly called the food of the mind. Like food, it must be digested and assimilated; it must show its nutritive power by promoting growth and strength, and by

enabling the mind to bring forth sound and vigorous productions. It must be converted *in succum et sanguinem*, into juice and blood, and not make its appearance again in the form in which it was originally imbibed. It is indeed true, and the instance may be brought in opposition to my doctrine, that Demosthenes transcribed Thucydides eight times with his own hand; but it should be remembered, that Demosthenes flourished long before printing was discovered, and that he was induced to transcribe Thucydides not only for the sake of improvement, but also for the sake of multiplying copies of a favourite author. Besides, he probably transcribed a good deal from memory; an exercise which certainly might assist to improve him in habits of composition.

A due degree of variety will contribute greatly to render reading agreeable. For, though it is true that no more than one or two books should be read at once, yet when they are finished, it will be proper, if any weariness is felt, to take up an author who writes in a different style, or on a different subject; to change from poetry to prose, and from prose to poetry; to intermix the moderns with the ancients; alternately to lay down the book, and to take up the pen; and sometimes to lay them both down, and enter with alacrity into agreeable company and public diversions. The mind after a little cessation, returns to books with all the voracious eagerness of a literary hunger. But the intermissions must not be long, nor frequent enough to form a habit of idleness or dissipation.

He who would read with pleasure (and I repeat, that all who read with real profit must read with pleasure), will attend to the times of the day and the seasons of the year. The morning has been universally approved as the best time for study: the afternoon may be most advantageously spent in improving

conversation. Those faculties which before dinner are capable of engaging in the acutest and sublimest disquisitions, are found, by general experience, to be comparatively dull and stupid after it. "I know not how it is," said a celebrated writer, "but all my philosophy, in which I was so warmly engaged in the morning, appears to me like nonsense as soon as I have dined."

Very hot weather is particularly unfavourable to reading. The months of July, August, and September, are by no means the seasons in which the fruits of the mind arrive at maturity. A rigid philosopher will perhaps maintain, that the mental faculties are not to be affected by the vicissitudes of cold and heat; but who will listen to philosophy who is already convinced by actual experience? It is indeed remarkable, that these months are selected for vacation in the houses of legislature, in the courts of law, and in the seats of learning. In the cold and inclement weather, when we are driven to the fire-side for comfort, we find that delight in our books which, in the vernal and autumnal season, we seek in the sunshine, and in the sweets of rural scenery. In the winter we no longer roam abroad, but collect our scattered ideas, and find, in the exercise of our faculties, that delight which is the consequence and reward of exerting, in a proper method, the natural energies of the divine particle which breathes within us.

But at all hours, and in all seasons, if we can restrain the licentious rovings of the fancy, soothe the passions of the heart, and command our attention so as to concentre it on the subject we examine, we shall be sure to find it amply rewarded. Attend closely, and close attention to any worthy subject will always produce solid satisfaction, pleasure as well as profit.

No. LXXXIII.

THE PROPRIETY OF ADORNING LIFE, AND SERVING SOCIETY, BY LAUDABLE EXERTION.

an age of opulence and luxury, when the native ers of the mind are weakened by vice, and general ts of indolence are superinduced by general in- ence, the moralist can seldom expect to see ex- les of that unwearied perseverance, of that noble disinterested exertion, which has sometimes ap- ed in the world, and has been called heroic virtue. ed, it must be allowed, that in the early periods of ty there is greater occasion, as well as greater e, for this exalted species of public spirit, than n all its real wants are supplied, and all its secu- s established, and the minds of men are enervated uxury.

nder these disadvantages there is, indeed, little ortunity for that uncommon heroism which leads ndividual to desert his sphere, and to act in con- iction to the maxims of personal interest and y, with a view to reform the manners, or to pro- e the honour and advantage of the community. iotism, as it was understood and practised by a tus, a Curtius, a Scævola, or a Socrates, appears in ern times so eccentric a virtue, and abhorrent n the dictates of common sense, that he who ld imitate it would draw upon himself the ridicule ankind, and incur the danger of being stigmatized s madman. Moral and political heroism would appear in scarcely a less ludicrous light than the avagancies of knight-errantry.

ut to do good in an effectual and extensive ner within the limits of professional influence, and erforming the business of a station, whatever it be, not only with regular fidelity, but with m and active diligence, is in the power, as it is the

duty, of every individual who possesses the use of his faculties in a state of independence. It is surely an unsatisfactory idea to live and die without pursuing any other purpose than the low one of sensual gratification. A thousand pleasures and advantages we have received from the disinterested efforts of those who have gone before us; and it is incumbent on every generation to do something not only for the benefit of contemporaries, but of those also who are to follow.

To be born, as Horace says, merely to consume the fruits of the earth; to live, as Juvenal observes of some of his countrymen, with no other purpose than to gratify the palate, though they may in reality be the sole ends of many, are yet too inglorious and disgraceful to be avowed by the basest and meanest of mankind.

There is, however, little doubt but that many whose lives have glided away in an useless tenour would have been glad of opportunities, if they could have discovered them, for heroic exertion. It is certainly true, that to qualify for great and extraordinary, whether political, military, literary, or patriotic efforts, peculiar preparations, accomplishments, occasions, and fortuitous contingencies, are necessary. Civil wisdom without civil employment, valour without an enemy, learning without opportunities for its display, the love of our country without power, must terminate in abortive wishes, in designs merely chimerical. They who project great schemes, and perform great exploits, must of necessity be few. But the exertions which CHRISTIAN CHARITY points out are extended to a great compass, are infinitely varied in kind and degree, and consequently adapted, in some mode or other, to the ability of every individual.

To the distinguished honour of our times and of our

country, it must be asserted, that there is no species of distress admitting alleviation which is not relieved; no charitable institution which is not encouraged with an emulative ardour of liberality. No sooner is a proper object of beneficence presented to the public view, than subscriptions are raised by all ranks, who crowd with impatience to the contribution. Not only the infirmities of age and sickness are soothed by the best concerted establishments, and the loss sustained by the calamities of a conflagration repaired, but our enemies, when reduced to a state of captivity, are furnished with every comfort which their condition can admit, and all the malignity of party-hatred melts into kindness under the operation of charity. From the accumulated efforts of a community of philanthropists, such as our nation may be called, a sum of good is produced, far greater than any recorded of the heroes of antiquity, from Bacchus down to Cæsar.

It has been said, that the ages of extraordinary bounty are passed. No colleges are founded in the present times it is true; yet not because there is no public spirit remaining, but because there is already a sufficient number raised by the pious hands of our forefathers to answer all the purposes of an academical institution. When a want is supplied, it is not parsimony, but prudence, which withholds additional munificence. The infirmaries diffused over every part of the kingdom are most honourable testimonies of that virtue which is to cover a multitude of sins. And there is one instance of beneficence, uncommon both in its degree and circumstances, which, though done without a view to human praise, must not lose even the subordinate reward of human virtue. He who lately devoted, during his life, a noble fortune to the relief of the blind, will be placed higher in the esteem of posterity than the numerous train of posthumous benefactors

who gave what they could no longer retain, and sometimes from motives represented by the censorious as little laudable. While angels of mercy record the names of Hetherington, Howard, and Hanway, in the book of life, let men inscribe them, after erasing the whole catalogue of conquerors, in the rolls of fame.

The motive of praise, though by no means the best, is a generous and a powerful motive of all commendable conduct. He would do an injury to mankind who should stifle the love of fame. It has burnt with strong and steady heat in the bosoms of the most ingenuous. It has inspired enthusiasm in the cause of all that is good and great. Where patience must have failed, and perseverance been wearied, it has urged through troubles deemed intolerable, and stimulated through difficulties dreaded as insurmountable. Pain, penury, danger, and death, have been incurred with alacrity in the service of mankind, with the expectation of no other recompence than an honourable distinction. And let not the frigidity of philosophical rigour damp this noble ardour, which excites delightful sensations in the heart that harbours it, and gives rise to all that is sublime in life and in the arts. When we are so far refined and subdued as to act merely from the slow suggestions of the reasoning faculty, we shall indeed seldom be involved in error; but we shall as seldom achieve any glorious enterprise, or snatch a virtue beyond the reach of prudence.

The spirit of adventure in literary undertakings, as well as in politics and commerce, must not be discouraged. If it produces that which is worth little notice, neglect is easy. There is a great probability, however, that it will often exhibit something conducive to pleasure and improvement. But when every new attempt is checked by severity, or neglected without examination, learning stagnates, and the mind is de-

pressed, till its productions so far degenerate as to justify disregard. Taste and literature are never long stationary. When they cease to advance, they become retrograde.

Every liberal attempt to give a liberal entertainment is entitled to a kind excuse, though its execution should not have a claim to praise. For the sake of encouraging subsequent endeavours, lenity should be displayed where there is no appearance of incorrigible stupidity, of assuming ignorance, and of empty self-conceit. Severity chills the opening powers, as the frost nips the bud that would else have been a blossom. It is blameable moroseness to censure those who sincerely mean to please, and fail only from causes not in their own disposal.

The praise, however, of well-meaning has usually been allowed with a facility of concession wich leads to suspect that it was thought of little value. It has also been received with apparent mortification. This surely is the result of a perverted judgment; for intention is in the power of every man, though none can command ability.

No. LXXXIV.

ON PHILOSOPHICAL CRITICISM, AND ON THE LITTLE ASSISTANCE IT GIVES TO GENIUS.

ARISTOTLE was the first of those writers who endeavoured to render taste subject to philosophy. His Poetics, mutilated and imperfect as they have come down to us, yet contain many sentences pregnant with matter, and which lead the mind into the most curious theory. Yet it is certain, that they never yet formed a single poet, nor assisted him in any other respect than in the mechanical contrivance of a plan; a defect in which is easily forgiven, when it is supplied by the native charms of real genius. Of this our Shakespeare

is a proof, who, with all his ignorance of critical refinement, wrote in such a manner as not only to be preferred by those who idolize him through prejudice, but by the most impartial readers, to Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.

Though the old scholastic metaphysics were scarcely ever more exploded than in the present times, yet there is a taste for metaphysical criticism particularly prevalent among our thoughtful neighbours in North Britain. The author of the Elements of Criticism has penetrated deeply to discern the cause of those emotions which literary compositions are found to produce. He has displayed great taste, great elegance, and a subtilty of inquiry which must have resulted from laborious attention, and from a singular share of natural sagacity. But I believe no reader ever found himself better able to compose, after having perused his volumes, than before. Nor is it said that their author, with all his theoretical knowledge of poetry, was himself a poet or an orator. This is not advanced to detract from his merit; for it is true of Aristotle, and of all those writers who, with a genius for logic and metaphysics, have entered on the provinces of taste and criticism. Dr Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric is a book of uncommon merit; it is read with great pleasure and improvement; yet it will be readily owned that it tends little to form the real orator. The author of the Origin and Progress of Language has displayed, as Harris says, "many judicious and curious remarks on style, composition, language, particularly the English; observations of the last consequence to those who wish either to write or judge with accuracy and elegance." This is partly true; and yet many have written, and many will write, with accuracy and elegance, without even hearing of this ingenious treatise.

Most of the books which the world has agreed to

admire were composed previously to the appearance of systematical and abstruse theories of criticism, or by authors who, it is well known, paid them no attention. Homer, who is still the best heathen author in the world, had neither archetype nor instructor. Had his mind been called off from the book of nature to such speculations as the Stagyrite afterwards fabricated from his noble inventions, there is great reason to believe that the Iliad and Odyssey had long ago gone whither all the coldly correct productions are daily hastening. Theocritus would probably have written with much less ease and simplicity, had he read all that critical ingenuity has advanced on pastoral poetry. The Orations of Demosthenes, however elaborate, were not formed on the models of professed rhetoricians, but of orators engaged in active political life. No Bossu had written when Virgil produced his magnificent work. No treatises on the sublime and beautiful had appeared when Milton poured his majestic song. Nature, glowing nature, suggested the exquisitely fine language and ideas as they flowed, and left laborious criticism to weary herself in forming rules and systems from the unstudied efforts of her happier temerity.

It must not, however, be immediately concluded, that these books, which display great ingenuity, are useless, and the result of ill-employed time and talents. They constitute a most elegant species of philosophy. They lead to a knowledge of the human heart, and the operation of the passions. They require genius of a peculiar kind, the subtile and penetrating; and they please readers who are possessed of a corresponding taste. The point which I mean to evince is, that the lover of poetry, and of oratory, who intends to exercise himself in composition, will find himself mistaken in his plan of study if he reads such writers as a preparatory discipline. Original authors must at

first engross his attention; and from these, if he is possessed of abilities, he will insensibly catch a portion of fire, with which he will invigorate his own compositions; and in consequence of which he will be read with pleasure, though he should not have studied one metaphysical critic, from Aristotle to his modern imitators, Harris, Home, and Monboddo.

To learn in what this noble distinction denominated genius consists, has been the subject of much inquiry. Little success has hitherto attended it; for the mind, as it has been often said, like the eye, though it calls up all nature to its view, cannot procure a sight of itself. With great probability it has been supposed, that genius is an extraordinary power of attention; a capacity in the mind of attaching itself closely and strongly, at a glance, to every object that solicits its regard; of taking in the whole of it in all its distant relations, dependencies, modifications, origin, and consequences. But if we allow an extraordinary power of attention to be genius, which perhaps cannot be allowed, the question recurs, By what means this attention is caused and secured? Thus far the name is only changed, and the subject still involved in its original difficulty.

It is too obviously true to be controverted, that there is an essential difference in the organization of different men; not merely in the external form, but in the interior structure of the invisible springs which regulate all the animal tendencies and motions. It is highly probable, that a delicate system of nerves, or a firmer contexture of them, is better able to observe the external world with unerring accuracy, than a more callous or more relaxed assemblage of these instruments of sensation. This favourable predisposition of the organs, followed by peculiar opportunities for collecting ideas, and by inducements to impart

...m to the world, may perhaps constitute what we ...l literary genius.

There is, indeed, little doubt but that some kind of ...nius, or, in other words, some peculiar ability to ...ceive a certain train of ideas necessary to the prac...e of an art, or to the pursuit of a profession, is ...ssessed by every individual not in a state of idiotism. ...ature, a kind parent to all her children, has usually ...dowed them all with a power of exerting themselves ...some way or other with skill and advantage. The misfortune has been, that the indications of nature are not always sufficiently manifest to the conductors of education. The destination is often necessarily fixed before the faculties have arrived at sufficient strength to point out their natural propensity.

Universal genius is indeed sparingly, perhaps never, bestowed. For the preservation of impartiality, where nature has allowed an excellence in any remarkable degree, she has often permitted a defect to counterbalance it. Yet, in the literary annals of almost every nation, we find many distinguished by intellectual endowments above the ordinary condition of humanity. It is a noble privilege to excel men in the very perfection by which they surpass the irrational animals, and is doubtless permitted by Providence, in a few individuals, for the happiness of human nature. Let it be considered, as an instance of the advantage which mankind derives from singular genius, what a train of light has been diffused far and wide on thousands and tens of thousands, for the space of near twenty hundred years, from the illumined understanding of the individual Cicero. Or, to take an example from our own polished age and country, let a conjecture be formed of the number of those who have been led to every thing good and great (KALOKAGATHIAN) by an Addison.

The world, however, has seldom been grateful to its benefactors. It has neglected, banished, poisoned, stoned, and crucified them. But there was an inward satisfaction in conscious rectitude, a generous spirit in heroic virtue, which bore them through every thing with comfort, and their merit increased and triumphed in adversity.

They who have been possessed of subordinate degress of genius have, in latter times, been induced to affect a singularity of sentiment and practice, in order to draw upon themselves the eyes of mankind. In pursuit of this end, they have adopted vices and principles which their hearts and understandings must have condemned. Eccentricity has been the object of their wishes. Ruin and disgrace have been the usual consequences; and the admiration of others has at last been extinguished in compassion. Poor man! it has been often exclaimed, he was indeed clever; but he wanted conduct, and he unfortunately died in a gaol.

If moral could be combined with mental excellence; if the native vigour of genius could submit to be guided and restrained by the decisions of well-conducted art; then might be supplied, what none will venture to expect, the two grand desiderata in morals and literature,—a perfect man, and a perfect work. But before perfection can be reasonably expected in any thing which belongs to man, this mortal must put on immortality, and this corruptible incorruption.

No. LXXXV.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD CHARACTER, CONSIDERED ONLY WITH RESPECT TO INTEREST.

As the minds of men are infinitely various, and as they are therefore influenced in the choice of a conduct by different inducements, the moralist must omit no motive, however subordinate in its nature, while it ap-

pears likely to lead some among mankind to a laudable or even a blameless behaviour. A regard to ease, to interest, and to success, in the usual pursuits of wealth and ambition, may induce many to pursue an honest and honourable conduct who would not have been influenced by purer motives; but who, after they have once perceived the intrinsic excellence and beauty of such a conduct, will probably persevere in it for its own sake, and upon higher considerations.

To those who are to make their own way either to wealth or honours, a good character is usually no less necessary than address and abilities. Though human nature is degenerate, and corrupts itself still more by its own inventions, yet it usually retains to the last an esteem for excellence. But even if we are arrived at such an extreme degree of depravity as to have lost our native reverence for virtue, yet a regard to our own interest and safety, which we seldom lose, will lead us to apply for aid, in all important transactions, to men whose integrity is unimpeached. When we choose an assistant or associate in a profession, a partner, or a servant, our first inquiry is concerning his character. When we have occasion for a counsellor or attorney, a physician or apothecary, whatever we may be ourselves, we always choose to trust our property and persons to men of the best character. When we fix on the tradesmen who are to supply us with necessaries, we are not determined by the outward sign of the lamb, or the wolf, or the fox, nor by a shop fitted up in the most elegant taste, but by the fairest reputation. Look into a daily newspaper, and you will see, from the highest to the lowest rank, how important the characters of the employed appear to the employers. After the advertisement has enumerated the qualities required in the person wanted, there constantly follows, that none need apply who cannot bring

an undeniable character. Offer yourself as a candidate for a seat in parliament, be promoted to honour and emolument, or in any respect attract the attention of mankind upon yourself, and if you are vulnerable in your character, you will be deeply wounded. This is a general testimony in favour of honesty, which no writings and no practices can possibly refute.

Young men, therefore, whose moral characters are yet unfixed, and who, consequently, may render them just such as they wish, ought to pay great attention to the first steps which they take on entrance into life. They are usually careless and inattentive to this object. They pursue their own plans with ardour, and neglect the opinions which others entertain of them. By some thoughtless action or expression, they suffer a mark to be impressed upon them, which scarcely any subsequent merit can entirely erase. Every man will find some persons, who, though they are not professed enemies, yet view him with an envious or a jealous eye, and who will gladly revive and aggravate any tale which malice has invented, or to which truth has given the slightest foundation.

Indeed, all men are so much inclined to flatter their own pride by detracting from the reputation of others, that, even if we were able to maintain an immaculate conduct, it would still be difficult to preserve an immaculate character. But yet it is wisdom not to furnish this detracting spirit with real subjects for the exercise of its activity. While calumny is supported only by imagination, or by malice, we may sometimes remove, by contradicting it; but wherever folly or vice have supplied facts; we can seldom do more than aggravate the evil, by giving it an apparent attention. The malignity of some, among the various dispositions of which mankind are composed, is often highly gratified at the view of injured sensibility.

In this turbulent and confused scene, where our words and actions are often misunderstood, and oftener misrepresented, it is indeed difficult even for innocence and integrity to avoid reproach, abuse, contempt and hatred. These not only hurt our interest, and impede our advancement in life, but sorely afflict the feelings of a tender and delicate mind. It is, then, the part of wisdom first to do every thing in our power to preserve an irreproachable character, and then to let our happiness depend chiefly on the approbation of our own consciences, and on the advancement of our interest in a world where liars shall not be believed, and where slanderers shall receive countenance from none but him who, in Greek, is called, by way of eminence, Diabolus, or the Calumniator.

No. LXXXVI.

ON THE OSTENTATIOUS AFFECTATION OF THE CHARACTER OF A LEARNED LADY, WITHOUT SUFFICIENT LEARNING, AND WITHOUT JUDGMENT.

The most attractive beauty of the person results from the graces of the mind. Delicacy, sweetness, sense, and sensibility, shining in the eyes, will compensate an irregularity of features, and sooner excite love, in a feeling heart, than the best formed face, and the finest complexional hue without expression.

Nature must, indeed, have laid the foundation of these amiable qualities in the disposition; but they are by no methods so effectually called forth and improved as by the cultivation of a taste for letters and the fine arts. In a vulgar intercourse with the world, we cannot avoid seeing and feeling the disagreeable passions, such as have an effect in distorting the countenance, and giving to the eyes an envious, a proud, a disdainful, or an artful aspect; than which nothing is more repugnant to the power of personal allurement. Eyes that unfortunately have acquired any of these

appearances, whatever beauties they may be surrounded with, possess a repellent influence, and operate like the basilisk. But, however wicked the world is, books are for the most part still virtuous. Human nature appears in them in its most pleasing colours. When properly chosen, they inspire generous and tender sentiments. She who is judiciously conversant with them in her youth, will find her countenance improving as her mind is informed, and her look ennobled as her heart is elevated. This must be a powerful motive for application among the ladies; and they may rest assured, that personal and mental beauty, though, when separate, their dominion is not absolute, are truly irresistible and despotic when combined.

An application to books, however, is often found not to produce any attractive effects; nor is it to be wondered at, when it is conducted in an injudicious and desultory manner. The advice of friends is at first necessary to point out the kind of books, and the times, the modes, and the degree of study. Superficial and ill-directed reading tends to inspire the most odious of all vanity, and to occasion a behaviour truly ridiculous.

Sempronia has studied all the magazines for these ten years past, and has now and then obtained the honour of contributing a little piece to some of her admired miscellanies. This flattering distinction, as she thinks it, has greatly elevated her in her own opinion. She deems it sufficient to emancipate her from the usual decorum of external behaviour. She talks with an overbearing confidence, which, if she were not excused because she is a professed wit, would be intolerable rudeness. Her attention to the Muses has excluded the Graces from any share of her notice. If you call upon her in the morning, you find her with slipshod shoes, a slovenly dress, and fingers begrimmed with

ink. If you ask her in what she is exercising her genius, she informs you, she is writing a Pindaric Ode on Spring, and is looking in Byshe's Art of Poetry for a rhyme to trees. It must be sent immediately, she says, or it will not be inserted this month. She hopes, therefore, that she may be excused in declining company. Her visitor has reason to rejoice at the dismission, for the sight of her is not pleasing, and her inattention to common civilities is disgustful.

Corinna happened to fall upon some of the works of our modern sceptics. She could not understand them perfectly; but she discovered enough to be assured that scepticism was supposed to be a mark of superior sense, of a freedom from those narrow prejudices which enthral the vulgar. She cannot, therefore, talk on common affairs; but when she gets into company with enlightened people, she expatiates on the happiness of possessing a philosophical turn, and pities the poor narrow souls who go to church, and perform all their duties, as they call them, with mechanical regularity, just like their great grandmothers. Voltaire, Rousseau, Bolingbroke, and Hume, are her oracles. She is dreaded by her own sex, and, indeed, voluntarily gives up their society. But the men she thinks more entertaining, more conversable, and less shackled with prejudices. She imagines herself particularly attended to by them; and indeed there are some humourists who listen to her conversation, in order to lay up store for ridicule. All who are judges condemn and dislike her, for entering into studies which have a natural tendency to darken the understanding and to corrupt the heart, and which are peculiarly odious in those who were formed to increase the comforts of life, and not to cut them off, by diffusing the gloomy notions of the sceptic.

It was the misfortune of Fulvia to live next door to

a circulating library. In every moment of listlessness the maid was despatched for a handful of novels, without regarding by whom they were written, or what they were in themselves, provided they were sentimental. By an uninterrupted course of such reading, she had acquired a taste for anecdotes, private history, and all that relates to the effects of love, which she was led to think formed the great business of human life. Her heart had been a thousand times melted, and pierced, and smitten, and wounded, and was at last so mollified, that she felt the tenderest sentiments for every man, with little distinction. She could not pass a few moments in a private interview with a male acquaintance without being conscious of a sentimental attachment. She often doubted whether she ought, upon the whole, to rejoice or lament that she was endowed with such extreme sensibility. But to be sure, so it was, her poor heart was so full of love, that every one who approached might have a share unasked. Her voice was faint and tremulous; her refinements elegant to a degree inconceivable. She was hardly fit for this low orb. She was always miserable, except when pouring out her sentiments in letters to some beloved Eudoxus. She was, in short, too tender, too susceptible, too pure, too elevated, to live in this world; and so every body said, till, in evil hour, she ran away with a corporal quartered in the town, and has never been heard of since.

Lesbia, when very young, wrote a few rhymes, which, as her age was considered, were much applauded by her friends. Flushed with praise, she considered herself as a second Sappho, and has ever since been devoted to the Muses. Her reading was chiefly confined to the poet's corner in newspapers, and her productions have rivalled her models. She composes enigmas, acrostics, rebusses, and songs, for those little

red pocket-books which are annually published for the ladies, and she had the honour of gaining the reward for expounding the prize-riddle. Within the circle of her acquaintance she is much admired. If a wedding happens among any of them, she pays for her bride-cake with an epithalamium; and she keeps in her drawers, like haberdashers' wares in a shop, odes, elegies, and epigrams, adapted to every occasion. But while she is soaring on the wings of poetical genius in her study, her poor little boys and girls are left to the company of the scullion in the kitchen. Her mind is extremely active, and it is but justice to allow that she neglects nothing but her duty.

Of all subjects, politics seem the least adapted to the female character. Women are excluded by the rude framers of our constitution, from all legislative influence; and it is well known that public affairs are seldom treated with temper, either in writing or conversation. But the female politician is by no means uncommon. Cornelia derives all her learning, of which she thinks she possesses an ample share, from the miscellaneous pages of a newspaper. She has herself sometimes ventured to communicate a paragraph or two, and has been delighted, even to rapture, with the thought that a plan or conjecture of hers has been wafted throughout the empire by so rapid a conveyance. On common subjects she is mild and reasonable; but while the gentlemen are talking politics, she submits with great reluctance to the frigid rules of decorum, which require that she should pay attention to the ladies. Her colour comes and goes for a long time, till at last she can bear it no longer, and bursts out with a blaze of eloquence scarcely rivalled in the most famous schools of oratory—those of Athens and Billingsgate. A treaty of marriage was on foot some time ago; but after the preliminaries were all settled, and a day for ratification

of the articles fixed, a rupture ensued on the adjustment of the balance of power; and hostilities have not yet ceased, nor is a coalition of the parties likely to take place.

In these few instances, and in those many which observation of the world will supply, there seems to have been some genius, and a love of books, which, properly directed, would have led to great improvements. But vague industry and unguided emulation, stimulated to persist in a wrong path by the partial praises of friends and relations, have precipitated even the amiably disposed into unsupported and insupportable vanity, and caused them to distinguish themselves without acquiring honour or esteem.

To be affected in any way, is at all times, in all places, and in all degrees, to be disagreeable. But affectation of learning and authorship in a woman with very little merit, draws upon itself the contempt and dislike of both sexes. They who excel most in either are found by experience to be most candid and modest, to assume least, and to join in conversation with others without displaying the sense of their superiority. Indeed it often happens, that there is an amiable humility in true genius and learning which compels the possessor of them to think diffidently of his own character, amid the united praises of all around. Let her, then, who possesses the bright jewels of genius and learning take care to set them in a plain manner, and their lustre will display an additional brilliancy.

In the embellishment of the person, a sufficient degree of care is usually taken that nothing unbecoming shall have a place in it. A regard is commonly paid to age, rank, and every circumstance which can point out the line of propriety. But in adorning the mind, it is usual to attend to little else but the dictates of inclination. Yet there is certainly a kind of sexual

difference in the minds of the sexes which admits and requires a different species of intellectual accomplishment. Economy, or the art of conducting a family, is said, indeed, to be the peculiar province of women; yet surely, as rational beings, their reason may properly receive the highest possible cultivation. Nor should their attainments occasion contempt or neglect, unless they are sullied by obtruding arrogance, by a masculine boldness, a critical severity, and an ill-timed and injudicious ostentation.

No. LXXVII.

ON THE FOLLY AND WICKEDNESS OF NEGLECTING A FAMILY AND CHILDREN FOR THE PLEASURES OF DISSIPATION.

THOUGH it may be true, as it has been asserted, that one age is not better than another, yet it is obvious to remark, that the modes, if not the degrees, of vice have varied at different periods; and that, of modes equally reprehensible in themselves, some are particularly destructive. Whatever have been the manners of preceding times in our own country, I believe it will be readily allowed, that the middle ranks were never universally affected with the love of a dissipating life till the present age. Domestic industry and economy, or the qualities distinguished by the homely titles of thriftiness and good housewifery, were always, till the present century, deemed honourable. They are now, however, discarded; and in their place have succeeded a passionate love of show without substance, a never-ceasing attention to dress, and an insatiable hunger and thirst after diversions, public and private.

Whoever considers the natural effect of excessive indulgence in relaxing and weakening the tone of the mind, will immediately perceive how pernicious it must be to human nature in general, and to each particular society. There can remain neither inclination nor

ability for exertion, when the strings which should give elasticity are all loose or broken: and without exertion, what is man? Behold what he is in the effeminate court of an oriental tyrant. Sunk in sloth, and prostrate in meanness, poor human nature, in such a situation, scarcely equals, in spirit or ingenuity, the monkey and baboon.

But I mean not to enlarge on dissipation in general, but to consider its effects in the limited circle of private families; from which, however, it gradually extends its influence over the whole community, throughout all its departments, like the undulations of a pebble thrown into a pool.

Let us suppose a married couple in the middle ranks of life—(and I select my instances from the middle ranks, because they are the most numerous and important)—let us suppose them just setting out, as it is called, in the world. The first object, in many instances, is to form and extend connexions. The ostensible motive is the advancement of the family interest; the real and most powerful motive, the love of various company, in continual succession. Dinners and suppers, dancing and card-playing, leave little time, and no inclination, for the sober business of the trade or profession. A neglected trade or profession cannot succeed; and the poor young people, after having spent the little and hard-earned patrimony which, it may be, their affectionate parents bestowed on them, live the rest of their lives in some poor lodging, in penury or servitude, or die of disappointment.

But if, by uncommonly good fortune, they avoid bankruptcy or ruin, yet their love of dissipation never fails to poison that happiness which it pretends to sweeten. It prevents them from performing the most indispensable duties, and living the life of rational creatures. All heads of families are presidents of little

societies, which they are bound to regulate by precept and example. But how shall they be qualified to do this who are seldom at home, and who, when they are there, are constantly engaged in vanity? Their own corruption descends, with additional malignity of influence, to the lowest menial servant who has sought protection beneath their roof.

But let us consider them in the relation of parents. Nothing can be more inconsistent with the life of a lady who delights in the fashionable amusements than the care of her new-born child. Her dress would be disconcerted, and her shape spoiled, were she to attempt to feed it herself with the food which nature has made convenient for it. She could not be absent from home. She must be liable to interruption at all hours. Her health also must fail under so constant a fatigue, added to the necessary toils of the ball, the rout, and the card-table. Her physician, for she takes care to keep the doctor on her side, declares, that, from the delicate imbecility of her constitution, it would be highly improper for her to submit to the exhausting task of suckling an infant. The little one, therefore, whose heavenly smiles would repay every maternal care, is sent to the cottage, or the garret, of some hireling nurse. There, amidst poverty, hunger, and nastiness, it drags a precarious existence, with no attention but the cold charity of a mercenary woman, who has often, at the same time, a child of her own to engross her maternal endearments. The mother, in the mean time, is engaged in the gay circle of an assembly, losing that money at cards, or spending it in dress and pleasures, which ought to pay her husband's creditors. Little thinks she how her poor infant, which ought to be fostered in her bosom, is bewailing, in the expressive language of tears, the neglect and the harsh treatment it undergoes in the dreary haunts of want and misery. Many a cold neglect, many a severe

menace, and many a hard blow, does the sweet babe receive from the passionate and ignorant nurse, at which a mother's heart would bleed, if it were not lost to sensibility. Poor innocents! unhappy orphans! deserted in your helpless state by those who have brought you into a wretched world; may He who took the children up in his arms, put his hands on them, and blessed them, have pity on your woes, on those injuries which ye sorely suffer, but cannot have deserved!

Life, however, is not easily extinguished; and notwithstanding all the pains and inconveniencies which the child undergoes from want of food, from want of cleanliness, from want of those tender attentions which a mother only can pay, it may indeed survive; but what remains of its lot is even more miserable than that which has already passed. As it has always been absent from home, it is a stranger there. Its parents feel but little natural affection for it; for natural affection fixes itself in the heart most deeply at that period when the infant is hanging at the breast, and smiling, as it were, with gratitude in the face of her who supplies it with delicious nourishment from her own vital current. Natural affection takes still firmer possession of the heart when the child begins to prattle, and to play those little tricks which none but a callous mind can behold without delight. But, alas! the little boy or girl are still considered as obstacles to pleasure at home. They pay a short and formal visit there, and are again dismissed to a nurse, locked up with servants in the garret, or transferred to their grandmother. The last is a most enviable lot, in comparison with the former, in which they not only experience harsh words and hard blows, but learn vulgar ideas, vulgar language, deceitful tricks, and habits of every kind, which must one day be unlearned.

As soon as they can walk firmly, and talk plainly,

they are removed to one of those convenient schools, or academies, as they are called, where children, at a very early age, are received as into nurseries. In the subsequent course of their education they are constantly kept from home; or, if they are indulged in a visit of a few days, they see little but what tends to mislead them. They receive no fatherly advice; and, whatever learning they may acquire at their schools, they usually enter on the stage to act their part in the drama of life without judgment and without principles to regulate their conduct. There is sometimes added to their misfortune of being neglected and misled, that of being deprived of all share of their parents' possessions; who, in the gay circles of pleasure, not only spend their own property, but involve themselves and their paternal estates in debt, and in every species of distressing and disgraceful embarrassment. There is no part of the family affairs of the dissipated votaries of pleasure which has not a tendency to ruin. They are themselves in a constant state of mortification and disappointment. Their object in pursuing a perpetual round of amusements is to obtain perpetual, unceasing delight; an object which human nature could never yet accomplish. They, of all others, are least likely to obtain it, who make pleasure a business, and, in prosecution of it, neglect their most important and their daily duties. Indeed, there is nothing more misapprehended than the nature of pleasure. Men are deluded by a name, and, catching at a phantom, lose the reality. The truest pleasure results from calm and moderate emotions. Noise, tumult, violence, disorder, take off the fine spirit from that which is otherwise formed to please, and leave little behind but dregs or disagreeable ingredients. Balls, assemblies, feasts, public diversions, cards, dress, various company, should be pursued only as, what they are, temporary amuse-

ments, and not the business of life. Ask those who are whirled in the vortex of fashion, whether they are happy? Notwithstanding they are engaged, without ceasing, in what the world call pleasure, they are as ready to, complain of languor and of misery as any other part of mankind. Pride and vanity compel them to move with others of their rank or fortune: but their countenances and words abundantly testify that they have, at least, their share of human uneasiness. They feel, indeed, the satisfaction of being distinguished from the poor, because their fortunes enable them to pay for the distinction; but that happiness is but slenderly supported which is founded only on the gratification of a weak and unmanly vanity.

With respect to that particular part of the evil resulting from dissipation, the neglect and consequent misery of families, it is certainly very extensive and important. Single men, and single women, however led astray by the false lights of their own vain imagination, suffer by themselves, or at least draw but a few in their train. But the whole rising generation must be endangered when dissipation is become universal among parents and the heads of families.

Selfish arguments may succeed when others fail: and I therefore wish I could convince the generality of a certain truth,—that there is really more pleasure to be found at the family fire-side, and in the regular performance of domestic duties, than in the never-ceasing pursuit of fashionable amusements. What is the delight of hearing an Italian sing, or of seeing a French dancer stand upon one leg, compared to that of listening to the prattle of one's own smiling babes, or beholding them in the raptures of a game at play? What is the delight of glittering at a ball, a rout, a masquerade, compared to that of a home, in which are found plenty, tranquillity, and love, uninterrupted by the extravagance,

he folly, the pride, and the restlessness of that ignorant, mpty, weak, and fickle, yet arbitrary tyrant, Fashion?

Not that the moralist is severe. He prohibits no noderate and reasonable enjoyments. He is too well cquainted with human nature, and with life, so to noralise. He maintains only, that, though dissipating leasures may be allowed as a temporary relief, they re fatal to happiness and virtue when they are suffered o engage the whole attention, or to become the chief mployment of life.

No. LXXXVIII.

ON FORMING CONNEXIONS WITHOUT FRIENDSHIP.

One can never sufficiently admire the liberal spirit f the great philosopher and orator of Rome, who, in is fine Treatise on Friendship, has exploded the idea, hat the prospect of advantage is the foundation of his virtuous union; and asserted, that it owes its rigin to a conviction of mutual excellence in morals nd disposition.

This generous opinion appears still greater and ore amiable when it is contrasted with the precepts nd the practices of later ages, and particularly of the resent. It is now one of the first admonitions given a young man, who is entering on the career of life, at he must at all events make connexions. And inead of informing him that he is to be directed in his hoice of them by the appearance of moral and mental xcellence, according to the sublime ideas of the noble oman, his sagacious monitors suggest to him, that he to be solely guided by the prospect of his interest nd advancement in the road of avarice and ambition. et a poor man of approved character, learning, and enius, and a rich man of fashion, with no pretensions either, be introduced to a sensible and prudent outh, initiated in what is called the knowledge of the

world, and you will see that, while the rich man is viewed with submission, complacence, and treated with almost idolatrous attention, the poor man stands by unnoticed, and probably despised. On the slight acquaintance of a first introduction, the young proficient in worldly wisdom will not fail to call at the rich man's house, and leave a card with most respectful compliments; he would not come into the neighbourhood without paying that respect on any account whatever: he is not half so scrupulous about going to church, and paying his court to his Maker; but at the very time while he is bowing at the threshold of the rich man, the philosopher shall pass by, and because he possesses only a competency without superfluity, and without influence, he shall not be honoured with the common civility of a salutation. For it is a maxim with mere worldly minds, that, as it is an honour to know and be known to persons of fortune and title, so it is a disgrace to acknowledge the slightest acquaintance with those who have nothing to recommend them but honour, spirit, learning, and virtue.

The formation of connexions is considered as so important, that it becomes, in effect, the principal object in the mean Chesterfieldian system of education. The boy whose parents are professed people of the world, would not, on any account, fail to place him at a school to which the sons of the nobility are often sent; though they are ready to confess, that little learning and great profligacy are the usual acquisitions in it. If the boy has grown intimate with the son of a duke, a lord, or a baronet, his parents are better pleased with him than if he had learned by heart all Horace, Virgil, and Homer. There is no submission so unmanly, and no attention so servile, but he is ready to pay them with alacrity, in accomplishing the important object of forming connexions. The mind is rendered, by these

means, low and abject; and though the boy may afterwards rise to the honour of being a nobleman's chaplain, or his travelling companion, yet he will retain, through life, and after he is promoted to the highest stations by his patron, the sentiments and spirit of his lordship's footman or valet-de-chambre.

A man unacquainted with the world might suppose, that the readiest road to preferment, in several of the professions, is to acquire the knowledge and accomplishments which are necessary to a skilful practice of them. But this is really not the case. The surest and most compendious method pointed out by the wise men of this world is to form connexions. Accordingly we observe many persons in the professions, who aim at distinction and advancement, by no means confining themselves to their libraries, growing pale over their professional pursuits, but studying the graces of dress and address, and the arts of simulation and dissimulation. We see them frequenting all public places, giving and receiving invitations to dinners and suppers, and evidently spending so much time in dissipation, as to leave scarcely an hour in a day for reading and study.

But would you forbid a young man the formation of connexions, by which so many have availed themselves, and risen to real and deserved grandeur? By no means; I would only teach him to preserve a just reverence for himself, and to despise all riches and all honours which must be purchased at the expense of truth, virtue, and a manly spirit. I would, like others, advise every young man (and it is chiefly to the young that I presume to suggest admonitions) to form connexions, or rather friendships; but to be guided in his choice of them by personal merit and approved character. I do not say, for it would be unnatural and unwise, that he should neglect interest, or despise advancement, when it can be procured consistently with the spirit and inte-

grity of an honest and delicate mind. If preferment comes unlooked for, and unsought by servile compliance, it is an honour as well as an advantage, and is doubly welcome. But if I must sacrifice my reason and my conscience, my honour and my freedom, in forming connexions and pursuing preferment, I relinquish the chase, and eagerly retire to competency, contentment, and liberty.

No. LXXXIX.

AN ADDRESS TO A YOUNG SCHOLAR, SUPPOSED TO BE IN THE COURSE OF A LIBERAL EDUCATION AT SCHOOL.

Your parents have watched over your helpless infancy, and conducted you, with many a pang, to an age at which your mind is capable of manly improvement. Their solicitude still continues, and no trouble nor expense is spared in giving you all the instructions and accomplishments which may enable you to act your part in life as a man of polished sense and confirmed virtue. You have, then, already contracted a great debt of gratitude to them. You can pay it by no other method but by using the advantages which their goodness has afforded you.

If your endeavours are deficient, it is in vain that you have tutors, books, and all the external apparatus of literary pursuits. You must love learning, if you intend to possess it. In order to love it, you must feel its delights; in order to feel its delights, you must apply to it, however irksome at first, closely, constantly, and for a considerable time. If you have resolution enough to do this, you cannot but love learning; for the mind always loves that to which it has been long, steadily, and voluntarily attentive. Habits are formed, which render what was at first disagreeable, not only pleasant, but necessary.

Pleasant, indeed, are all the paths which lead to po-

lite and elegant literature. Yours, then, is surely a lot particularly happy. Your education is of such a sort, that its principal scope is to prepare you to receive a refined pleasure during your life. Elegance, or delicacy of taste, is one of the first objects of a classical discipline; and it is this fine quality which opens a new world to the scholar's view. Elegance of taste has a connexion with many virtues, and all of them virtues of the most amiable kind. It tends to render you at once good and agreeable. You must, therefore, be an enemy to your own enjoyments, if you enter on the discipline which leads to the attainment of a classical and liberal education with reluctance. Value duly the opportunities you enjoy, and which are denied to thousands of your fellow-creatures.

Without exemplary diligence you will make but a contemptible proficiency. You may, indeed, pass through the forms of schools and universities, but you will bring nothing away from them of real value. The proper sort and degree of diligence you cannot possess, but by the efforts of your own resolution. Your instructor may, indeed, confine you within the walls of a school a certain number of hours. He may place books before you, and compel you to fix your eyes upon them; but no authority can chain down your mind. Your thoughts will escape from every external restraint, and, amidst the most serious lectures, may be ranging in the wild pursuit of trifles or vice. Rules, restraints, commands, and punishments, may, indeed, assist in strengthening your resolution; but, without your own voluntary choice, your diligence will not often conduce to your pleasure or advantage. Though this truth is obvious, yet it seems to be a secret to those parents who expect to find their son's improvement increase in proportion to the number of tutors and external assistances which their opulence has ena-

bled them to provide. These assistances, indeed, are sometimes afforded, chiefly that the young heir to a title or estate may indulge himself in idleness and nominal pleasures. The lesson is construed to him, and the exercise written for him, by the private tutor, while the hapless youth is engaged in some ruinous pleasure, which at the same time prevents him from learning any thing desirable, and leads to the formation of destructive habits, which can seldom be removed.

But the principal obstacle to improvement at your school, especially if you are too plentifully supplied with money, is a perverse ambition of being distinguished as a boy of spirit in mischievous pranks, in neglecting the tasks and lessons, and for every vice and irregularity which the puerile age can admit. You will have sense enough, I hope, to discover, beneath the mask of gaiety and good-nature, that malignant spirit of detraction, which endeavours to render the boy who applies to books, and to all the duties and proper business of the school, ridiculous. You will see, by the light of your reason, that the ridicule is misapplied. You will discover that the boys who have recourse to ridicule, are, for the most part, stupid, unfeeling, ignorant, and vicious. Their noisy folly, their bold confidence, their contempt of learning, and their defiance of authority, are, for the most part, the genuine effects of hardened insensibility. Let not their insults and ill-treatment dispirit you. If you yield to them with a tame and abject submission, they will not fail to triumph over you with additional insolence. Display a fortitude in your pursuits equal in degree to the obstinacy in which they persist in theirs. Your fortitude will soon overcome theirs, which is seldom any thing more than the audacity of a bully. Indeed, you cannot go through a school with ease to yourself, and with success, without a considerable share of

courage. I do not mean that sort of courage which leads to battles and contentions, but which enables you to have a will of your own, and to pursue what is right amidst all the persecutions of surrounding enviers, lunces, and detractors. Ridicule is the weapon made use of at school, as well as in the world, when the fortresses of virtue are to be assailed. You will effectually repel the attack by a dauntless spirit and unyielding perseverance. Though numbers are against you, yet, with truth and rectitude on your side, you may be IPSE AGMEN, though alone, yet equal to an army.

By laying in a store of useful knowledge, adorning your mind with elegant literature, improving and establishing your conduct by virtuous principles, you cannot fail of being a comfort to those friends who have supported you, of being happy within yourself, and of being well received by mankind. Honour and success in life will probably attend you. Under all circumstances you will have an internal source of consolation and entertainment, of which no sublunary vicissitude can deprive you. Time shows how much wiser is your choice than that of your idle companions, who would gladly have drawn you into their association, or rather into their conspiracy, as it has been called, against good manners, and against all that is honourable and useful. While you appear in society as a respectable and valuable member of it, they have sacrificed at the shrine of vanity, pride, extravagance, and false pleasure, their health and their sense, their fortunes and their characters.

No. XC.

THE WANT OF PIETY ARISES FROM THE WANT OF SENSIBILITY.

IT appears to me, that the mind of man, when it is free from natural defects and acquired corruption, feels

no less a tendency to the indulgence of devotion than to virtuous love, or to any other of the more refined and elevated affections. But debauchery and excess contribute greatly to destroy all the susceptible delicacy with which nature usually furnishes the heart; and, in the general extinction of our better qualities, it is no wonder that so pure a sentiment as that of piety should be one of the first to expire.

It is certain that the understanding may be improved in a knowledge of the world, and in the arts of succeeding in it, while the heart, or whatever constitutes the seat of the moral and sentimental feelings, is gradually receding from its proper and original perfection. Indeed, experience seems to evince, that it is hardly possible to arrive at the character of a complete man of the world without losing many of the most valuable sentiments of uncorrupted nature. A complete man of the world is an artificial being; he has discarded many of the native and laudable tendencies of his mind, and adopted a new system of objects and propensities of his own creation. These are commonly gross, coarse, sordid, selfish, and sensual. All or either of these attributes tend directly to blunt the sense of every thing liberal, enlarged, disinterested; of every thing which participates more of an intellectual than of a sensual nature. When the heart is tied down to the earth by lust and avarice, it is not extraordinary that the eye should be seldom lifted up to heaven. To the man who spends his Sunday (because he thinks the day fit for little else) in the counting-house, in travelling, in the tavern, or in the brothel, those who go to church appear as fools, and the business they go upon as nonsensical. He is callous to the feelings of devotion; but he is tremblingly alive to all that gratifies his senses or promotes his interest.

It has been remarked of those writers who have

attacked Christianity, and represented all religions merely as diversified modes of superstition, that they were indeed, for the most part, men of a metaphysical and a disputatious turn of mind, but usually little distinguished for benignity and generosity. There was, amidst all their pretensions to logical sagacity, a cloudiness of ideas, and a coldness of heart, which rendered them very unfit judges on a question in which the heart is chiefly interested; in which the language of nature is more expressive and convincing than all the dreary subtleties of the dismal metaphysicians. Even the reasoning faculty, on which we so greatly value ourselves, may be perverted by excessive refinement; and there is an abstruse, but vain and foolish, philosophy, which philosophizes us out of the noblest parts of our rational nature. One of those parts of us is our sense of religion, of which not one of those brutes which the philosophers most admire, and to whose rank they they wish to reduce us, is found in the slightest degree to participate.

Such philosophers may be called, in a double sense, the enemies of mankind. They not only endeavour to entice man from his duty, but to rob him of a most exalted and natural pleasure. Such, surely, is the pleasure of devotion. For when the soul rises above this little orb, and pours its adoration at the throne of celestial Majesty, the holy fervour which it feels, is itself a rapturous delight. Neither is this a declamatory representation, but a truth felt and acknowledged by all the sons of men, except those who have been defective in sensibility, or who hoped to gratify the pride or the malignity of their hearts by singular and pernicious speculation.

Indeed, all controversial and metaphysical writings on the subject of religion, are unfavourable to genuine piety. We do not find either that the most renowned

polemics in the church militant, or the profoundest among the school divines, were at all more attentive than others to the common offices of religion, or that they were actuated by any peculiar degree of devotion. The truth is, their religion centred in their heads, whereas its natural region is the heart!—confined, alas! in colleges or libraries, unacquainted with all the tender charities of husband, father, brother, friend; some of them have almost forgotten that they possess a heart. It has long ceased to beat with the pulsations of love and sympathy, and has been engrossed by pride on conquering an adversary in the syllogistic combat, or by impotent anger on a defeat. With such habits, and so defective a system of feelings, can we expect that a doctor of the Sorbonne, or the disputing professor of divinity, should ever feel the pure flame of piety that glowed in the bosoms of Mrs. Rowe, Mrs. Talbot, or Mr. Nelson?

An inexperienced and unobservant man might expect to find extraordinary devotion and piety in the chapels and colleges of our English universities. Our young academics are summoned to prayers in some colleges not less often than four times every day throughout the year. But do they attend voluntarily, or in obedience to a statute? Is there any particular piety or decency in the performance of collegiate worship? Quite the reverse: for, it is observed, that in no places of worship are the prayers read in a more careless or perfunctory manner; in none less appearance of devotion than in the chapel of a college. The reason is, that those who are forced to attend in them consist, for the most part, either of thoughtless youth, or of dry logicians and metaphysicians, who, in the towering heights of their wisdom, are superior to the weaknesses of a devotee. I have seen in many a country-church, where the congregation consisted only of

honest husbandmen and their families, more appearance of devotion than is usually visible in the seats of learning and of religion. Men shut up in cloisters, with every want supplied by the bounty of founders and benefactors, and compelled to frequent the house of prayer, are less likely to feel the ardour of devotion, than the common tribes of mankind, warmly engaged in the busy scenes of many-coloured life, and deeply impressed with the vicissitudes of joy and sorrow.

It is however certain, that a devotional taste and habit are very desirable in themselves, exclusive of their effects in meliorating the morals and disposition, and promoting present and future felicity. They add dignity, pleasure, and security to any age: but to old age they are the most becoming grace, the most substantial support, and the sweetest comfort. In order to preserve them, it will be necessary to preserve our sensibility; and nothing will contribute so much to this purpose as a life of temperance, innocence, and simplicity.

No. XCI.

ON THE PLEASURES OF A GARDEN.

Not he alone is to be esteemed a benefactor to mankind who makes an useful discovery, but he also who can point out and effectually recommend an innocent and obvious pleasure. Of this kind are all the pleasures arising from the observation of nature, and they are highly agreeable to every taste uncorrupted by vicious indulgence.

There will always be many in a rich and civilised country, who, as they are born to the enjoyment of competent estates, engage not in business, either civil or professional. But the restless mind must either find or make an object. Pleasure, therefore, becomes to the employed a serious pursuit. Whatever is its

essence, and whatever the declaimer may urge against it, pleasure will be sought by all who possess the liberty of election. It becomes, then, incumbent on the moralist, not only to urge the performance of duty, but to recommend objects that please without enervating the mind, and gratify desire without corrupting the principles.

Rural scenes, of almost every kind, are delightful to the mind of man. The verdant plain, the flowery mead, the meandering stream, the playful lamb, the warbling of birds, are all capable of exciting emotions gently agreeable. But the misfortune is, that the greater part are hurried on in the career of life with too great rapidity to be able to give attention to that which solicits no passion. The darkest habitation in the dirtiest street of the metropolis, where money can be earned, has greater charms, with many, than the groves of Hagley, or the lawns of Stowe.

Yet the patron of refined pleasure, the elegant Epicurus, fixed the seat of his enjoyment in a garden. He was of opinion, that a tranquil spot, furnished with the united sweets of art and nature, was the best adapted to delicate repose. And even the severer philosophers of antiquity were wont to discourse with peculiar delight in the shade of a spreading tree in some cultivated plantation.

It is obvious, on intuition, that nature often intended solely to please the eye in her vegetable productions. She decorates the floweret that springs beneath our feet in all the perfection of external beauty. She has clothed the garden with a constant succession of various hues. Even the leaves of the tree undergo a pleasing vicissitude. The fresh verdure which they exhibit in the spring, the various shades which they assume in summer, the yellow and russet tinge of autumn, and the nakedness of winter, afford a constant

pleasure to a lively imagination. From the snow-drop to the moss-rose, the flower-garden displays an infinite variety of shape and colour. The taste of the florist has been ridiculed as trifling; yet surely without reason. Did nature bring forth the tulip and the lily, the rose and the honeysuckle, to be neglected by the haughty pretender to superior reason? To omit a single social duty for the cultivation of a polyanthus, were ridiculous as well as criminal; but to pass by the beauties lavished before us without observing them, is no less ingratitude than stupidity. A bad heart finds little amusement but in a communication with the ambitious world, where scope is given for the indulgence of selfish passions; but an amiable disposition is commonly known by a taste for the beauties of the animal and vegetable creation.

The northern countries of Europe are by no means well adapted to the true enjoyment of rural scenery. Our vernal seasons, which the poets celebrate in all the luxuriance of description, are commonly rendered cold and uncomfortable by the long continuance of an easterly wind. Our poets borrowed their ideas of a spring from the poets of Italy, who collected theirs from nature in their climate. A genial day in April is among us the subject of general congratulation. And while the lilac blossoms, and the laburnum drops its golden clusters, the shivering possessor of them is constrained to seek warmth at the side of his chimney. Yet from the temperature of our climate we derive a beauty unknown in the gardens of a warmer country. Few objects are more pleasing than the smooth lawn; but the soft verdure which constituses its beauty is not to be found in more southern climates. It is certainly true, that the rarity of our truly vernal weather, like that of other delights, increases the pleasure of it; and it is probable, for this

reason, that an Englishman, notwithstanding his complaints against his atmosphere, enjoys the pleasures of a garden in their full perfection. A fine day, says Sir William Temple, is a kind of a sensual pleasure; but surely it would cease to be such if every day were fine.

A practical attention to a garden is by some esteemed a degrading employment. It is true, indeed, that pastoral and agricultural manners, if we may form a judgment from the dignified descriptions of Virgil, are greatly degenerated. The employments of shepherds and husbandmen are now become mean and sordid. The work of the garden is usually left to a peasant. Nor is it unreasonable to assign the labour which wearies without amusement to those who are sufficiently amused by the prospect of their wages. But the operations of grafting, of inoculating, of pruning, of transplanting, are curious experiments in natural philosophy; and that they are pleasing as well as curious, those can testify who remember what they felt on seeing their attempts in the amusement of practical gardening attended with success.

Among the employments suitable to old age, Cicero has enumerated the superintendence of a garden. It requires no great exertion of mind or body; and its satisfactions are of that kind which please without violent agitation. Its beneficial influence on health is an additional reason for an attention to it at an age when infirmities abound.

In almost every description of the seats of the blessed, ideas of a garden seem to have predominated. The word Paradise itself is synonymous with garden. The fields of Elysium, that sweet region of poesy, are adorned with all that imagination can conceive to be delightful. Some of the most pleasing passages of Milton are those in which he represents the happy pair engaged in cultivating their blissful abode, the garden

of Eden. Poets have always been delighted with the beauties of a garden. Lucan is represented by Juvenal as reposing in his garden. Virgil's Georgics prove him to have been captivated with rural scenes; though, to the surprise of his readers, he has not assigned a book to the subject of a garden. Our Shenstone made it his study; but, with all his taste and fondness for it, he, it must be confessed, was not happy in it. The captivating scenes which he created at the Leasowes afforded him, it is said, little pleasure in the absence of spectators. The truth is, he made the embellishment of his grounds, which should have been the amusement of his life, the business of it; and involved himself in such troubles by the expenses it occasioned, as necessarily excluded the tranquil enjoyment of a scene which nature and art had combined to render delightful.

It is the lot of few, in comparison, to possess territories like his, extensive and sufficiently well adapted to constitute an ornamented farm. Still fewer are capable of supporting the expense of preserving it in good condition. But let not the rich suppose they have appropriated the pleasures of a garden. The possessor of an acre, or a smaller portion, may receive a real pleasure from observing the progress of vegetation, even in a plantation of culinary plants. A very limited tract, properly attended to, will furnish ample employment for an individual. Nor let it be thought a mean care; for the same hand that raised the cedar formed the hyssop on the wall. Even the orchard, cultivated solely for advantage, exhibits beauties unequalled in the shrubbery; nor can the green-house produce an appearance to exceed the blossom of the apple and the almond.

"Amusement reigns," says Dr. Young, "man's great demand." Happy were it, if the amusement of a

garden were more generally relished. It would surely be more conducive to health, and the preservation of our faculties to extreme old age, were a portion of that time which is now devoted to the pleasures of the table and to cards spent in the open air, and in active employment, amidst the beauties of cultivated nature.

No. XCII.

ON THE GRAVE AND GAY SPECIES OF PHILOSOPHY.

THE world has ever been viewed by men of different dispositions in a light totally different. The thoughtful and melancholy have represented it as a vale of misery; the gay and the volatile, as a theatre abounding with delightful entertainments, if the spectators are but in good humour. The whole difference, indeed, it has been said, arises from the various state of the minds of men, in health, in sickness, in prosperity, in adversity. It would seem probable that the greater part would be inclined to view things in the more agreeable light, from motives of self-interest and gratification. But the truth is, there are almost as many followers of Heraclitus as of Democritus.

That there is an essential difference in the orginal form of minds, there is no doubt; and to this cause is principally to be attributed, that some are gloomy, others cheerful. But habit is often no less concerned than nature. For it is remarkable, that, among moral writers, those who have enjoyed wealth and the company of the great, and who consequently partook of various pleasures, have commonly chosen the comfortable kind of philosophy; while they who were oppressed by want, and excluded from enjoyment, have no less naturally represented life, such as they found it, as a state of misery, interrupted only by short-lived and unsubstantial gratifications.

The English nation is characteristically grave; and

of course the graver kind of philosophy has been much cultivated in England. There are few books that please more generally than the Night Thoughts of Young. Hervey's Meditations are more frequently read than many works of humour; and Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress has given as much pleasure among the English vulgar as the Quixote of Cervantes.

But our increase of wealth, and our imitation of French and Asiatic manners, have greatly altered our taste and manners, if not natural disposition. We begin to relish none but the gayer kind of philosophy; and we have almost exploded tragedy from the stage. Horace would at present be more read than Juvenal, and Lucian than Seneca.

Every admirer of dignified diction and of solid sense must be delighted with the Rambler; and yet it has been said, that the World, and other less solid performances, have been more read and approved. It must, indeed, be confessed, that those excellent papers induce a melancholy by no means compatible with an active, cheerful, or pleasurable life. They inspire virtuous sentiments, but they depress those spirits which are necessary to put them in practice. I venerate their justly celebrated author; I admire his great exertions; and when I assert, that the gloomy grandeur of some among his moral writings communicates a sympathetic sadness to the reader's mind, I by no means detract from his literary honours. He laboured under what he called a morbid melancholy.

The philosophy of Epicurus is in some degree adopted by the greater part of the moderns, most of whom embrace his tenets, who have scarcely heard of his name. The truth is, human nature is naturally inclined to pursue pleasure, and to avoid all that has the appearance of wretchedness and woe. Even they who devote themselves to melancholy find a gloomy

pleasure in it; a pleasure scarcely recognised by the gay and luxurious, but yet a great and real pleasure.

The severe philosophy, though less agreeable to the gayer ranks, is the more favourable to virtue. Seneca and Antoninus are severe. They exhibit life in its less pleasing aspects, and exact duties not to be performed without painful efforts. But they call forth the latent powers of the mind, and, by requiring an exertion beyond the natural strength, really compel it to effect all that it is able. Indolence prevents men in general from effecting all that they are able. The pleasurable system dissuades them from the attempt. And if there were not some austere instructors, and some faithful followers of them, there would not be active virtue enough in a community to preserve its political existence in a state of vigour.

In the earlier periods of society the grave philosophy is most cultivated, for then virtuous exertions are most necessary, and luxurious indulgencies precluded. Success, and increase in wealth and glory, are the usual consequence. Luxury succeeds in a course, as certain, in all its stages, as any physical progress. A taste for a light, cheerful, fanciful philosophy, soon explodes the sullen precepts of rigid moralists. Manners are relaxed, and naturally bring on a declension of empire. At least all regard for liberty is lost; and the mind, enervated with pleasure, gladly sinks in the repose of despotism.

It is too evident to be denied, that in our own country the severer philosophy loses ground. This, among many others, is a symptom of corruption, and the harbinger of decay. An imitation of foreign manners has greatly accelerated this revolution in our sentiments. And, after all, it is a forced and unnatural change; for an Englishman, whether from the influence of climate, or some cause inherent in his constitution, is by nature grave, and disposed to admit manly

thoughts, to practise manly actions, and to be a votary of what is called stern virtue.

The influence of books on the national manners in a community, of which almost every member devotes some part of his time to reading, must be important. And among other methods which might be used to excite the spirit of patriotism and heroic excellence, it might be proper to restore a taste for solid and severe morality, and to explode those light, superficial, sentimental, and affected productions, which, while they please the sickly mind, increase its imbecility.

No. XCIII.

ON MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS.

It was the early wish of Pope, that, when he died, not a stone might tell where he lay. It is a wish that will commonly be granted by the mourners with reluctance. The affection of those whom we leave behind us is at a loss for methods to display its wonted solicitude, and seeks consolation under sorrow in doing honour to all that remains. It is natural that filial piety, parental tenderness, and conjugal love, should mark, with some fond memorial, the clay-cold spot where the form, still fostered in the bosom, moulders away. And did affection go no further, who could censure? But, in recording the virtues of the departed, either zeal or vanity often leads to an excess perfectly ludicrous.

A marble monument with an inscription palpably false and ridiculously pompous, is far more offensive to true taste than the wooden memorial of the rustic, sculptured with painted bones, and decked out with death's head in all the colours of the rainbow. There is, indeed, an elegance and a classical simplicity in the turf-clad heap of mould which covers the poor man's grave, though it has nothing to defend it from the insults of the proud but a bramble. The primrose

that grows upon it is a better ornament than the gilded lies on the oppressor's tomb-stone.

The prostitution of praise is injurious to virtue. That imaginary life after death, which consists in a remembrance of our worth cherished in the breasts of others, though it is despised by the severe reasoner, has commonly been an additional motive for exertion to the noblest spirits that have dignified human nature. But when we see the studied panegyric engraven on the marble that encloses the remains of the worthless, we despise an eulogium that mankind are mean enough to bestow on every one that will pay the stone-mason. Thus one powerful motive is lost, which might operate on the generous in stimulating them to a worthy conduct.

On the tombstones of the truly great it is certainly right that an inscription should be written consistent with their dignity. In order to be so, it must not be prolix. When their names and age make all the sepulchral history of distinguished personages, it seems to be implied that the rest is sufficiently known; but when the marble ambitiously enlarges on their excellence, it argues that the world wants the information. It is better that the passenger, when he sees an eminent name, should recollect, while he strikes his pensive bosom, the virtues of him who lies beneath the tablet, than that his remarks should be anticipated by an obtrusive and ostentatious inscription.

The style of epitaphs usually adopted has been too diffuse. The noble ancients, those patterns of unaffected magnificence, consulted real dignity in the brevity of their epitaphs. As an historical monument, at an age when printing was unknown, they sometimes engraved the exploits of a warrior on the marble; but in general they recorded little more than the name of the departed. The Grecian muse sometimes poured

the sweet melody of verse at the shrine of a poet, artist, or hero; but she never condescended to mean flattery, nor displayed the bloated ostentation of a modern panegyric.

There are many excellent epitaphs in the English language, both in verse and prose. In the diffuse kind, that on the infamous Chartres, inserted in Pope's Works, is a fine model. Westminster Abbey exhibits many inscriptions written with manly, forcible, and energetic elegance. The great fault has been, a redundance of epithets in the superlative degree.

We have also many fine poetical epitaphs. Those of Dryden and Pope are the most deservedly celebrated; though Pope's have been severely criticised by Johnson. In general, the metrical are inferior to the prosaic. Some of the best are crowded with antitheses, a fault which renders them inferior to the Grecian; and some of the worst, many of which are found in the most public cemeteries, stand forth a disgrace to national taste. The love of rhyme descends to the lowest ranks. The parish-clerk is commonly called upon for a stave or two of verses, by every rustic that can raise a post and rail to the memory of his relation; and there are few churchyards in the kingdom where that favourite stanza, "Afflictions sore long time I bore," occurs not more than once; yet I have often thought that if it had been in Greek hexameter and pentameter, it would have been culled as a choice flower for the Anthologia.

But our epitaphs are most commonly written in Latin; probably because it is intelligible to foreigners, and is capable of more elegance and elevation. Our country has produced many writers remarkable for beautiful latinity: accordingly we find inscriptions in every part of the kingdom abounding with classical expressions. The misfortune has been, that many of

them have encroached on the province of heraldry; and real dignity has been lost in the affectation of it, in a tedious and circumstantial detail of descents, pedigrees, and relationship. The reader is tired before he has obtained a clear idea of the character and family described. His eyes have failed, even if his attention persevered. The epitaph on the pious Nelson, for instance, consists of above eighty lines.

The punning and epigrammatic epitaph was much in fashion a century or two ago. That on Fair Rosamond at Godstowe might surely have been replete with the tenderest sentiment; but it is merely a wretched distich of puns and monkish rhymes. This species is at present quite exploded, and little need be said to prove its great impropriety. False wit is always misplaced; but the true seems to be excluded from the epitaph. Who can bear merriment or buffoonery on a tombstone? The tender and elegiac, or the manly and severe style, seems to be best adapted to the monumental inscription. But neither the pathetic nor sublime is compatible with the ludicrous.

The authors of our epitaphs are seldom known. One of the best that I can recollect was the classical Bourne. The few he has left us are master-pieces. That in Westminster Abbey, on Dickinson, the architect, is truly sublime.

In our island there has certainly been no dearth of genius for monumental inscriptions; though there is one circumstance which might induce a foreigner to think the contrary. The famous duchess of Marlborough is said to have offered, without success, five hundred pounds for an epitaph adequate to the dignity of her Duke. Her grace, whose taste was not very just, would probably have expected a history long enough to cover with inscription the unwieldy pile of stones called Blenheim-house. I cannot help

thinking, that a tedious epitaph, minutely relating his achievements, would rather lessen than exalt him in the eyes of mankind. Would not Alexander the Great have appeared beneath the dignity of his name, if it had been written on his tomb, that the son of Philip was reputed to have been, in his day, the wisest general, the boldest hero, the most accomplished man, with a hundred other encomiastic epithets? Would he have excited much admiration if he had been handed down to us merely in an epitaph abounding with those inflated superlatives which Gothic ideas of grandeur have now introdnced? It might have served as a complimentary epitaph on an alderman who died of repletion; and would, perhaps, have borne some analogy to him in the circumstance of unnatural tumour.

No. XCIV.

CURSORY THOUGHTS ON BIOGRAPHY.

AMONG the many arguments advanced to recommend the study of history, it has been said, that it teaches wisdom without the danger of experience, and, by pointing out the paths of those who have gone before us, facilitates the journey of life. History has been called philosophy teaching by examples. But, after all, it must be allowed, that civil history at large is less capable of regulating moral than political conduct. The descriptions of battles, the accounts of debates, the characters of kings and heroes, contain very little that can direct the actions of the private and the more numerous ranks of the community.

But an exact and authentic account of individuals who have greatly excelled in any of the departments of active or contemplative life, seems to afford a mode of instruction best suited to an animal, like man, prone to imitation. When a single character is distinctly delineated, we can pursue every line with an ease equal

to that with which the painter copies from an original picture placed before his eyes. We have the express authority of the pattern we have chosen to direct us in every emergency, and can tread, with implicit confidence, in the footsteps of the most distinguished men, without the suspense of deliberate selection. It is a remark of Aristotle, that the story of an individual, as it is a single object, is comprehended more fully, and therefore attended to with greater pleasure, than a history in which many personages are introduced.

For these reasons, biography appears to be more instructive than civil history, though it has commonly been written with a less degree of attention. Herodotus is all sweetness and harmony. Thucydides exhibits the solid and austere beauties. Xenophon, the Attic bee, presents us with a style flowing with honey. Livy displays a most masterly composition, and paints in glowing colours all that he relates. Sallust rivals his Grecian master Thucydides. Guicciardin and Vertot have exhibited in their writings some of the genuine graces of the historic muse. But among biographers, scarcely any can justly claim a rank with the writers of the golden age.

As a diligent collector of facts, as an entertaining narrator, as a warm friend to virtue, I venerate the name of Plutarch. His writings bear evident marks of extensive reading, and communicate much and multifarious knowledge, and always take the side of virtue. Theodore Gaza has said, that if all books were lost, and he might recover one, it should be Plutarch. Plutarch's Works are indeed an invaluable treasure of ancient learning; for he selected passages from books now totally lost, and inserted them very liberally in his works. Add to this, that he is an admirable moral essayist. But his judgment seems not to have been always strong enough to manage the unwieldy mass of

materials he had collected. He indulged the weakest superstition. He is ever relating stories which Horace calls ANILES, or the tales of old women. Merely for an ostentatious display of erudition, he digresses beyond all reasonable limits. His idea of drawing parallels, or comparing the lives of Romans with Greeks, was excellent; and he has sometimes drawn his parallels admirably, though, as the critics say, not without a partiality to his own countrymen. The critics have convicted him of this unphilosophical attachment in the comparison between Tully and Demosthenes, Cato and Aristides, Sylla and Lysander, Marcellus and Pelopidas.

They who are willing to allow Plutarch every other merit give up his style as harsh and inelegant. Though certainly an useful, he cannot be esteemed a fine or elegant writer; and whatever merit he possesses, his instance does not refute the assertion, that biographical has never yet equalled civil history.

The long and diffuse accounts of Plutarch have been compared to colossal statues; the concise histories of Cornelius Nepos to medallions. Cornelius Nepos has a claim, from the age he flourished in, from his language, and from his fidelity, to the rank of a classic; but by no means to the first rank. It is suspected by many, that, as Trogus was epitomized by Justin, so Nepos, as we have received him, was abbreviated by a writer who flourished under Theodosius in the decline of polite literature. The Life of Atticus, if we may pronounce from internal evidence, continues unaltered, and reflects great honour on its writer, as a fine picture of a beautiful original.

Diogenes Laertius, another biographer, chose a subject well adapted to display ingenuity. The lives of the wisest men whom the world ever produced, if well written, would have been a most valuable acquisition

to ancient learning. But, with a fine subject, he is deemed by the critic, and whoever reads him must agree with them, a poor writer.

It is to be wished that Tacitus had more frequently exercised his talents in biography. His life of Agricola is, perhaps, the best biographical work that was ever composed. It is written in that beautiful energetic style, which characterizes this spirited historian; and it is more pleasing than his other works, because it exhibits not a deformed portrait. Mallet's Life of Bacon is a good imitation of it, and, I think, though it has been depreciated, a fine composition in the department of biography.

Suetonius probably drew his pictures from the life, and they are loathsome to behold. They are, however, useful to the philosopher, as they enable him to form a more complete idea of human nature in all the gradations of degeneracy and perfection. They are also tolerably well written. Concise, nervous, simple; they please by their perspicuity, and their freedom from ambitious ornament. To the honour of their author, it must be said, that he appears to have advanced nothing through flattery or resentment, nor to have suppressed any thing through fear, but to have paid an undaunted regard to veracity. Erasmus observes, that he wrote as freely as the emperors whom he described had lived.

It is matter of surprise and regret, that we have not more biographers. Thousands and tens of thousands, eminent in every accomplishment, whose examples might have instructed the world, are become as though they had never been. In our own country, it is true, that there are many biographical compilations, but they are for the most part incomplete. Wood's Athenæ, though a book that does honour to a most celebrated university, has no merit as an ele-

gant composition. But I must not omit the tribute of praise to the writer of the Life of Cicero; who has given us a most accurate account of one of the greatest men that ever lived, in a style truly classical and manly. The public is also indebted to the author of the Rambler for many masterly pieces of biography. His portraits would be more universally and permanently pleasing, if he had not too often indulged his spleen, and in too many instances converted a harshness of feature into extravagant caricature. I never could admire either the writings or the life of the chief object of his panegyric, the unfortunate Savage; and I can scarcely read with patience his Life of Milton.

Worth is often unknown, or known imperfectly, till after death; till that period, when it is too late to learn particular circumstances with accuracy. Hence it has happened, that many of our second-rate authors and actors in every department of life, though richly deserving a place in the annals of fame, are recorded only in those volumes, where to be born and die, as Pope says, makes all the history.

To preserve their own actions from oblivion and misrepresentation, some writers have been their own biographers. The task requires great delicacy. The very attempt, indeed, implies a considerable degree of self-value; but it has been justified by the examples of Thuanus and others of inferior merit.

There has appeared in our times and country a biographical work on an extensive plan. The first edition of the Biographia Brittannica was well designed, yet unequally, and upon the whole indifferently, executed. Many distinguished lives are totally omitted; many which are insignificant, tediously described. Though there was sometimes much labour and sagacity exerted, yet there were few masterly remarks, and scarcely any well written lives. Most of the articles

were furnished by writers of no great repute; and there was every reason for a new edition. I wish the new edition had fallen into the hands of a good writer. If I might presume to suggest an improvement, I would advise, that elegantly engraved heads should be prefixed to every life, whenever they can be procured; and that the materials should not be collected from books only, but from the traditionary reports, and the manuscript letters remaining in the families of descendants. The names of the living persons who communicate the hints should be added, both to secure and to confirm their authenticity. There is much danger of fabrication and forgery, where family vanity can be so easily gratified. Honesty, as well as accuracy and diligence, are required to make a Biographia Britannica a truly valuable work, worthy of being transmitted to the latest posterity.

No. XCV.

ON HOSPITALITY, AND THE CIVILITIES OF COMMON LIFE.

In the days of Horace, our countrymen were reputed to be savage in their behaviour to strangers. Though in the present age the charge would be unjust, yet it must be owned, that there is a reserve in the manner of an unadulterated Englishman which seems to confirm the opinion, that he inherits a portion of that unsocial spirit which disgraced his ancestors. But, whatever may be his natural propensity, it is certain that, in the liberal intercourse and comprehensive education which prevail in the present times, there is scarcely any country in the world where a more cordial hospitality is displayed than in some parts of England at a distance from the metropolis.

The days of Elizabeth have been extolled as the days of genuine hospitality. The doors were thrown open, and, at the sound of the dinner-bell, all the neighbour-

ing country crowded to the smoking table. These were happy times, indeed, says the railer against modern refinement. Yet it has been justly doubted whether this indiscrimate hospitality was laudable and useful. There was something generous and magnicent in the idea, and it gave the nobles of the land the influence of kings over their neighbourhood. Yet, if its motive and its moral effects are considered, it will appear to be justly exploded. It proceeded from the love of power and ostentation, and it produced idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, and all their consequent vices.

Considered in a charitable light, as affording food to the hungry, the old British hospitality will be found a less useful mode than the modern institutions for the accomplishment of that purpose. It did not select its objects; it considered not the degrees of indigence or of desert. The consequence was, that it increased indigence and lessened desert; for experience has proved, that unnecessary alms, however amiable the motive of them, do a real injury where they mean a benefit. They promote idleness, by teaching poverty to rely on other aid than the efforts of an honest industry.

The great number of houses now established for the reception of travellers in every part of the kingdom, and the expeditious modes of travelling, which render delay unnecessary, have contributed to restrain and render superfluous that general hospitality which opened the door to all who came. Such indiscriminate hospitality is no longer wanted; but there never was a time when judicious kindness and civility of all kinds, were more liberally shown to strangers than the present. And whatever the old Romans, or the modern Gauls, may assert of British ferocity of manners, no

Italian or Frenchman of known character ever came to our separated shore *(toto divisos orbe Britannos)*, without having felt delight at his hearty reception, and regret on his departure.

It seems probable that the better kind of hospitality keeps pace with civilisation. As the minds of a people are enlarged by improvements in knowledge, and communication with their neighbours, the selfish and morose affections gradually lose ground. In several parts of Europe, where social improvements have not yet reached, the traveller is either considered as lawful prey, or totally disregarded. On the other hand, we find the natives of the Society Isles, separated as they are from all the rest of the world, remarkably hospitable. Though fear might, in some degree, cause their civility to Europeans, yet it was not the sole motive of it; for we find their good offices, after all apprehensions were removed, evidently proceeding from the tenderest and most generous affection. On the first appearance of the English on their coasts, they naturally considered them as enemies, and boldly opposed their invasions. Many of them exhibited acts of heroism in defence of their country scarcely exceeded in the annals of antiquity. But no sooner was the branch of peace held out, than they received their wonderful visitors with open arms, with a humanity that reflects disgrace on the maritime villages of Europe, where a shipwrecked fellow-creature and fellow-countryman has often been destroyed for the sake of plundering his vessel. In other islands discovered by our circumnavigators, we find that no kindness could mitigate the ferocity of the rude child of nature. The hospitality of barbarians, like all virtues that proceed not from principle, but from humour and accidental causes, is of little value. A clearer light than the light

of nature is necessary to give a steady operation to the feelings of humanity.

The idea which Christianity has suggested of the relation in which all men stand to each other, is wonderfully adapted to promote universal hospitality. When we consider all men as brothers, we naturally receive the stranger within our gates with cordial kindness, as a relation whom we have never seen before, and to whom we wish to display some signal of our love. It is indeed true, that many who are justly esteemed worthy persons do not reduce this generous idea to practice; and the reason seems to be, that they suffer the attachments of domestic life, and the connexions of consanguinity, to engross the whole of their affections. Add to this, that the actual exercise of beneficence requires something which is less in our power than benevolence.

However just the complaints of the misery of life, yet great occasions for the display of beneficence and liberality do not often occur. But there is an hourly necessity for the little kind offices of mutual civility. At the same time that they give pleasure to others, they add to our own happiness and improvement. Habitual acts of kindness have a powerful effect in softening the heart. An intercourse with polished and humane company tends to improve the disposition, because it requires a conformity of manners, a conquest over selfishness and pride. And it is certain, that a sense of decorum, and of a proper external behaviour, will restrain those whose natural temper would otherwise break out in acrimonious and petulant conversation. Even the affectation of philantrophy will in time contribute to realize it. The pleasure resulting from an act of kindness naturally excites a wish to repeat it; and, indeed, the general esteem which the character of benevolence procures, is sufficient to induce

those to wish for it who act only from the mean motives of self-interest. Nothing is more generally beloved and admired than genuine philanthropy.

As we are placed in a world where natural evil abounds, we ought to render it supportable to each other, as far as human endeavours can avail. All that can add a sweet ingredient to the bitter cup must be infused. Amid the multitude of thorns, every flower that will grow must be cultivated with care. But neither pomp nor power are of themselves able to alleviate the load of life. The heart requires to be soothed by sympathy. A thousand little attentions from all around us are necessary to render our days agreeable. The appearance of neglect in any of those with whom we are connected, chills our bosom with chagrin, or kindles the fire of resentment. Nothing, therefore, seems so likely to ensure happiness as our mutual endeavours to promote it. Our single endeavours to obtain happiness, originating and terminating in ourselves, are usually unsuccessful. Providence has taken care to secure that intercourse which is necessary to the existence of society, by rendering it the greatest sweetener of human life.

By reciprocal attentions we are enabled to become beneficent without expense. A smile, an affable address, a look of approbation, are often capable of giving a greater pleasure than pecuniary benefits can bestow. The mere participation of the studies and amusements of others, at the same time that it gratifies ourselves, is often an act of real humanity; because others would not enjoy them without companions. A friendly visit in a solitary hour is often a greater act of kindness than a valuable present.

It is really matter of surprise that those who are distinguished by rank and opulence should ever be unpopular in their neighbourhood. They must know

the value of popularity; and surely nothing is more easily obtained by a superior. Their notice confers honour; and the aspiring heart of man is always delighted with distinction. A gracious look from them diffuses happiness on the lower ranks. But it usually happens that an overgrown rich man is not the favourite of a neighbouring country; and it is unfortunate, that pride or inadvertence often prevents men from acting the godlike part of making others happy, even when they might do it without inconvenience to themselves, merely by civility and attention.

No. XCVI.

RELIGIOUS AND MORAL PRINCIPLES NOT ONLY CONSISTENT WITH, BUT PROMOTIVE OF, TRUE POLITENESS AND THE ART OF PLEASING.

A PHILOSOPHER who, in the austerity of his virtue, should condemn the art of pleasing as unworthy cultivation, would deserve little attention from mankind, and might be dismissed to his solitary tub, like his brother Diogenes. It is, indeed, the dictate of humanity, that we should endeavour to render ourselves agreeable to those in whose company we are destined to travel in the journey of life. It is our interest, it is the source of perpetual satisfaction; it is one of our most important duties as men, and particularly required in the professor of Christianity.

I have therefore lamented, that they who have taken the most pains to recommend an attention to the art of pleasing have urged it only on the mean motives of self-interest. In order to attain the power of pleasing, they have recommended flattery and deceit; and though they have required in their pupils the appearances of many good qualities, they have not insisted on any substantial and consistent virtue.

It is my wish to exalt this amiable talent of pleasing to the rank of a virtue founded on principle,

and on the best dispositions of human nature. I would separate it from those varnished qualities, which, like whited sepulchres, are but a disguise for internal deformity. A student of the art of pleasing, as it is taught in the school of fashion, is all softness and plausibility, all benevolence and generosity, all attention and assiduity, all gracefulness and gentility. Such, at least, is the external appearance; but compare it with his private life, with those actions which pass unseen, and you will find them by no means correspondent to the specious outside. You will usually find a hard heart, meanness, selfishness, avarice, and a total want of those principles from which alone true benevolence, sincere friendship, and gentleness of disposition, can originate. You will, indeed, find even the appearances of friendship and benevolence proportioned to the supposed riches and rank of him whose favour and patronage are cultivated.

It is a favourite maxim with those who teach the art of pleasing, that, if you desire to please, you can scarcely fail to please. But what motive, according to their doctrine, is to excite this desire?—a wish to render all with whom you converse subservient to your interested purposes of avarice or ambition. It is a mean and despicable motive, when made the sole and constant principle of conversation and behaviour. If this life is the whole of our existence, if riches and honours are the chief good, if truth, honour, and generosity, are but names to adorn a declamation, then, indeed, they who practise the art of pleasing, according to the vulgar idea of it, or, in plain terms, according to the rules of Lord Chesterfield, are, after all, the truly and the only wise. But let us not deem so meanly of the world and its Creator; and if our favourable opinion of things be an error, it is not only pardonable, but glorious; and a generous man

will say, like the noble ancient, he had rather err with a Socrates and a Plato, than be right with a Machiavel.

But, indeed, the virtues and the graces are much more nearly allied than they who are strangers to the virtues are willing to acknowledge. There is something extremely beautiful in all the moral virtues, clearly understood and properly reduced to practice. Religion is also declared to be full of pleasantness, in that volume in which its nature is described with the greatest authenticity. It must, indeed, be allowed, that he who is actuated in his desire of pleasing by morality and religion, may very properly add all the embellishments of external gracefulness; and he may rest assured, that the sincerity of his principles, and the goodness of his character, will ensure a degree of success in his attempts to please, which a false pretender, with all his duplicity, can never obtain or preserve.

If true politeness consists in yielding something of our own pretensions to the self-love of others, in repressing our pride and arrogance, and in a gentleness of sentiment and conduct; surely nothing can be more conducive to it than a religion which every where recommends brotherly love, meekness, and humility. I know not how paradoxical my opinion might appear to the fashionable assemblies at St. James's, or to the professed men of the world, or to the proficient in what I call the insincere art of pleasing; but I cannot help thinking, that a true Christian, one who thinks and acts, as far as the infirmity of his nature will permit, consistently with the principles of his religion, possesses qualities more capable of pleasing than any of those which are said so eminently to have distinguished a Marlborough and a Bolingbroke. The pious and amiable Mr. Nelson seems to me to have

deserved the epithet of all-accomplished much better than he to whom it has been so often applied; and, if we may judge by his writings, and the accounts given of his life, as, on the one hand, there never was a better Christian, so, on the other, there never appeared a politer gentleman. It is evident that he derived his art of pleasing not from a study of the world, or practising the tricks of little worldlings, but from the lovely qualities recommended in the Gospel, and from an imitation of the humble Jesus. They who study the art of pleasing will probably have recourse, as usual, to the many volumes written on the subject in the French language, or to the posthumous letters of a frenchified Englishman; and perhaps they would smile if an instructor were to refer them for the best rules that have ever been given to the Sermon on the Mount.

It is however certain, that the art of pleasing, which is founded on sincere principles, derived from religion and morality, is as far superior to that base art which consists only in simulation and dissimulation, as the fine brilliancy of the real diamond excels the lustre of French paste; or as the roseate hue on the cheek of Hebe, the painted visage of a haggard courtezan. The insincere art of pleasing resembles the inferior species of timber used by the cabinet-maker, which, in order to please the eye, requires the assistance of paint; but the art which is founded on sincerity is more like that which displays far greater beauty in the variety and richness of its own native veins and colour. A short time, or a slight touch, destroys the superficial beauty of one, while the other acquires new graces from the hand of time.

The rules and doctrines of morality and religion tend to correct all the malignant qualities of the heart, such as envy, malice, pride, and resentment. In doing

this, they cut off the very source of disagreeable behaviour. Morality and religion inculcate whatever is just, mild, moderate, candid, and benevolent. In doing this, they effectually promote a system of manners, which, without any sinister design in the person who possesses them, cannot fail of being agreeable. If to these substantial powers of pleasing are added the last polish of a graceful deportment, the habits acquired in good company, an acquaintance with men and manners, a taste for polite arts and polite books, no other requisites will be wanting to perfect the art, and form an all-accomplished character. A man will be under no necessity of hurting his conscience and reputation in cultivating I know not what of a deceitful and affected behaviour. He may be at once pleasing and respectable, and grow in favour with men without offending God.

It is one circumstance greatly in favour of that art of pleasing which I recommend, that, even if it should not always succeed in pleasing those with whom we converse, it will be sure to please our own hearts; it will be sure to satisfy our conscience with a sense of rectitude at the time we are acting under its direction, and to furnish us with a tranquil delight, unalloyed by the remembrance of treachery and meanness, on a retrospect of our lives and conversation. It reconciles man to himself, and brings peace at the last.

No. XCVII.

ON THE GUILT OF INCURRING DEBTS WITHOUT EITHER A PROSPECT OR AN INTENTION OF PAYMENT.

AMONG the various devices which young men have invented to involve themselves in difficulties and in ruin, none is more frequent than that of incurring debt at a very early age without any real necessity. No sooner is the aspiring youth emancipated from his

school, or his guardian and superintendents, than he becomes, in his own idea, a man; and not only so, but a man of consequence, whom it behoves to dress, and make a figure. To accomplish the purpose of making a figure, some expensive vices are to be affected or practised. But as the stipends of young men just entering into life are usually inconsiderable, it is necessary to borrow on the most disadvantageous terms, or to purchase the various requisites of a pleasurable life on credit. The debt soon accumulates from small beginnings to a great sum. The young adventurer continues, while his credit is good, in the same wild career; but adieu to real pleasure, to improvement, to honest industry, and to a quiet mind. His peace is wounded. A perpetual load seems to weigh him down; and though his feelings may, by length of time and habit, become too callous to be affected by the misery of his situation, yet he is lost to all sincere enjoyment; and, if he fall not a victim of despair, survives only to gain a precarious existence at the gaming table, to deceive the unwary, and to elude the re searches of persecuting creditors. Even if he be enabled, by the death of his parents or rich relations, to pay the debts which his youthful folly has contracted, yet has he suffered long and much, and lost the beginning of life, the season of rational delight and solid improvement, in distress and fears, in fabricating excuses and pretences, and in flying from the eager pursuit of duns and bailiffs.

But this folly, however pregnant with misery, is entitled to pity, and may, in some degree, admit of those usual palliations,—youthful ardour, and want of experience. Thousands, and tens of thousands, have ruined their fortunes and their happiness by hastily running into debt before they knew the value of money, or the consequences of their embarrassment. We

pity their misfortune; and, in the first part of their progress, who do not usually accuse them of dishonesty.

But the habit of incurring debt, though in the earlier periods of life it may originate in thoughtlessness, commonly leads to a crime most atrocious in itself, and injurious to society. He who prayed against poverty, lest he should be poor, and steal, understood human nature. Difficulties and distresses have a natural tendency to lessen the restraints of conscience. The fortress of honour, when stormed by that sort of poverty which is occasioned by profligacy, and not defended with sound principles (such as men of the world do not often possess), has for the most part yielded at discretion. He, then, who began with incurring debt merely because he was strongly stimulated by passion or fancy, and was not able to pay for their gratification, proceeds, when the habit is confirmed, and the first scruples dismissed, to contract debt wherever unsuspecting confidence will afford him an opportunity.

If he possesses titles, distinction, or any kind of eminence, he will not find it difficult to gain credit. Young tradesmen, desirous of making connexions, are ready to run any risque; and hope that, if it is long before they receive their money, they shall not be without the great man's patronage or recommendation. But here also they are often deceived; for the great man without principle, considers his creditors as his enemies, and never thinks of them but to contrive methods to avoid and deceive them. If he happens to receive any money, he takes care to expend it among strangers, who have no other demand upon him but for the commodity which he pays for at the time of purchase. The world is wide; and when one set of credulous tradesmen are wearied with expectation and

disappointment, the great man migrates to another part of the town or country, and condescends to confer on some ambitious but unfortunate mortal the honour of dealing with him. Thus he goes on during the greater part of his life; and when the creditors are importunate, and the horrors of a gaol impend, he collects his property, and withdraws from the kingdom, or, living in disguise, enjoys his luxuries, and laughs at his deluded tradesmen. Indeed, as most ill qualities go together, his pride is so great, that he scarcely vouchsafes to bestow upon such low creatures as tradesmen a moment's consideration.

But while the builder, the draper, the tailor, the butcher, the baker, and the chandler, remain unpaid, the jockey and the horse-dealer, the mistress and the brother-gamester, receive ready money with ostentatious profusion. Sharpers and prostitutes, with all the qualities of thievery, riot in those riches which ought to be paid to honest men, who, with their families, are reduced to a state of starving, by feeding, clothing, and accommodating some hardened profligate and extravagant debauchee. Who but must feel indignation when he sees a man in high life, as it is called, eating a joint of meat of some poor tradesman, whose children are at the same moment begging of their parents a morsel of bread? Who beholds, without abhorrence, my lord or sir John sitting joyous at the head of a plentiful table, supplied, gratis, with every article, by the father of those children?

Indeed, the pride and vanity of some persons, who value themselves on their birth, or their fashionable mode of life, induce them to look upon themselves as a superior order of beings, and to presume that they have a right to be still supported by their tradesmen in profusion and elegance, even after they are reduced in their circumstances, either by misfortune or miscon-

luct. If an honest man makes his demand, he is impertinent; his insolence is not to be borne; he is dismissed; but not till he evidently shows that he will no longer supply the commodities in which he deals. On his dismission, some exception is taken to his account: a dispute ensues, and that dispute furnishes the fine gentleman or fine lady with a pretence for not paying the bill. In the mean time, card-parties, visitings, and all fashionable amusements, proceed as usual: for who would be so vulgar as to attend to the impertinence of the scum of the earth, or suffer one fashionable pleasure to be set aside by the clamorous importunity of a mean mechanic; though his meanness arises from his having spent his substance in supplying the person who despises him with the instruments of luxury, or even the necessaries of life?

The profligacy, the vanity, the unceasing pursuit of pleasure, and the passion for external appearance, which characterize the present age, are necessarily productive of expense: expenses occasion distress; and distress, where principles are deficient, dishonesty. No wonder, then, that in no age have sharpers, swindlers, and insolvent contractors of debt, so much abounded. There is hardly any mode of public life, especially in the metropolis, in which you can be engaged, without having your property exposed to the depredations of villians, who have made cheating a profession, and reduced the art of robbery to a regular system.

Many of the persons who live on the substance of others, by borrowing, purchasing, or employing, without intending and without being able to pay, make a splendid figure, and pass for gentlemen and men of honour. But, however they may felicitate themselves on their success, and in the gratification of their pride and vanity, I shall not hesitate to pronounce

them more criminal and detestable than highwaymen and house-breakers, because to the crime of actual theft they add a most ungenerous breach of confidence.

No. XCVIII.

CURSORY REMARKS ON THE LIFE, STYLE, GENIUS, AND WRITINGS OF PETRARCH.

One of the first and brightest luminaries which appeared in the literary horizon, after a long and dismal night, was the illustrious Francisco Petrarcha. He was born at Arezzo, as he informs us himself, though Vossius very ingeniously denies it. He became archdeacon of Parma, and canon of the cathedral church of Padua, and might have arrived at the highest preferments which the popes can bestow, if he had not disdained some dishonest and humiliating compliances.

To form an adequate idea of the merit of the writers who arrived at excellence in the dawn of literature, it is necessary to consider with attention those peculiar circumstances which rendered even a mediocrity of learning a difficult attainment. Books were scarce, judicious instructors still more uncommon, and the powerful instigation of contemporary models in a great measure deficient. Petrarch's claim to entire originality is not, however, universally allowed. He certainly imitated Cino de Pistoja; and Bayle says, he stole many of his sentiments from him. Dante, indeed, preceded Petrarch; but I do not find that he made Dante his model. With real difficulties and impediments, and with few circumstances to excite a spirit of enterprise sufficently ardent and persevering to surmount very formidable obstacles, it is really wonderful that any individual could, at the period at which Petrarch flourished, ascend, by his own efforts, the eminent heights of superior excellence.

Such, however, was the native force of Petrarch's genius, that, in the middle of an unenlightened age, he became celebrated throughout the civilised nations of Europe as an orator, philosopher, and poet.

His poetical fame is, indeed, the most distinguished. Formed with the finest sensibility of soul, he had the peculiar felicity of being born in a country whose language is the language of love. The ardour, the constancy, and the romantic nature of his passion, rendered him universally popular in an amorous and romantic age. In our own country he became the pattern of one of our earliest poets, Henry Howard, earl of Surrey. And amidst all the disadvantages of a Northern and Gothic language, the English poet has celebrated his lovely Geraldine in strains which are said, by some, to display more of the genuine tenderness of nature than those in which the great Italian sung his Laura.

"In the sonnets of Surrey," says Mr. Warton, "we are surprised to find nothing of the metaphysical cast which marks the Italian poets, his supposed masters, especially Petrarch. Surrey's sentiments are for the most part natural and unaffected, arising from his own feelings, and dictated by the present circumstances. His poetry is alike unembarrassed by learned allusions, or elaborate conceits. If our author copies Petrarch, it is Petrarch's better manner, when he descends from his Platonic abstractions, his refinements of passion, his exaggerated compliments, and his play upon opposite sentiments, into a track of tenderness, simplicity, and nature. Petrarch would have been a better poet had he been a worse scholar. Yet, upon the whole, I should as soon think of preferring Surrey to Petrarch, as of preferring a Gothic country church to a Grecian temple."

It is certainly true, that several of the poets who have devoted themselves to the description of the tender passion have shown that they really did not feel it in its greatest strength and purity while they wrote. The love which nature inspires does not dictate antithesis, point, conceit, and witticism. But Ovid, the poet of Love, abounds with these even in his most impassioned verse. Cowley's Mistress is by no means distinguished by the language of passion. I know not that even the gentle Waller expresses the sentiments which a tender and ardent lover feels and utters. Hammond has written like one who was but little smitten with the tender passion. Petrarch, also, has often addressed his verses to the understanding, when they should have been directed to the feelings; has endeavoured to please the imagination with an opposition of images, when all his skill should have been exerted in causing the nerves to vibrate at the touch of sympathy. The mind of the reader is disappointed, when, instead of the simple expressions of nature, he finds the subtilty of art and the quaint conceits of false wit; nor does he allow ingenuity on the subject of love to be a compensation for pathos.

It has been said, that the diction of Petrarch is obscure. The want of perspicuity arises chiefly from his having adopted a great many terms in the provincial language, which, since his time, has ceased to be colloquial in Italy, though it has been preserved by the poets in imitation of their master. The admission of antiquated expressions is allowed by the best judges to be an exquisite mode of adding a dignity to composition. It has been prescribed by the best critics, and practised by the best writers. And, with respect to the obscurity it may occasion, the fault is in the reader. Poetry has a language of its own. For the

sake of elevation, it is constrained to seek a diction remote from conversation or familiar prose. He who reads and criticises poetry, ought to be acquainted with its peculiar and idiomatic language. Homer, Virgil, Milton, wrote in a diction which will not be understood by him who has been solely conversant in the prosaic writings of their several languages. This, indeed, may be justly said, that the dignity of the epopœa may require this method of contracting a venerable air, much more than the humbler strains of the plaintive inamorato. If any of Petrarch's obscurity arises from the confusion of his ideas, or his perplexed method of expressing them, no veneration for his name must protect him from censure. Indeed, several very able critics have complained, that they could not understand him without an interpreter.

Enough of his meaning and of his beauties has been understood by his own countrymen to give him the title of the Father of the Tuscan Poetry. The classical excellence of his language has contributed to give a name to the century in which he lived; for the Italians call it the good age of their language, and attribute the happy effect in a great measure to Petrarch. Sweet, indeed, are the greater part of his sonnets; sweet their language, and sweet their sentiments. Though criticism may point out quaintnesses and unnatural conceits, may censure one part as metaphysical, and another as affected, yet the sensible reader will not judge by parts, but by the whole effect of an entire piece; and if his feelings have been often finely touched, and his imagination delighted, he will give himself up to the magic of the poet, and, joining in the general applause, leave the cold critic to whisper his detraction disregarded.

The love-verses of some writers cannot be recom-

mended without danger. But the sort of love which Petrarch felt, supposing the object a proper one, refines and ennobles humanity. It is a species of passion which was never felt in the slightest degree by the modern debauchee. It partakes something of the nature of religious devotion; and, while it elevates human nature in idea, it contributes something to its real exaltation. Chastity was the virtue of the age in which romantic love prevailed, and one virtue is allied to all. The age was virtuous, in comparison with those times in which love is degraded to its lowest species, and even the philosophers endeavour to reduce man to the humiliating condition of a mere animal.

But Petrarch is not to be considered only as an Italian poet: he wrote Latin poetry with great reputation; and indeed, during his life, seems to have acquired more honour from that, than from his vernacular productions. It was for his Africa that he was crowned with laurel in the Capitol of Rome. This work was a kind of heroic poem in honour of Scipio Africanus, "whose name," says he, "I know not how, was dear to me from the earliest age."

His Africa is acknowledged to be an imperfect work. It had not the last hand of its great author; but it abounds with historical matter, and with the fictions of poetry. The hand of a master is visible. The poetical fire sometimes burns with genuine heat and light. Yet, upon the whole, it is a work more conspicuous for genius than judgment, and wants that polish which a better age would certainly have bestowed. Had Petrarch written nothing but Latin poetry, he would have possessed but a subordinate place in the temple of Fame.

The prose works of Petrarch are voluminous. He indeed is honoured with the name of the Restorer of

the Latin language. Great was his merit in recalling a language which had almost sunk into oblivion; yet, I think, it had been fortunate for the reputation of Petrarch if he had written all his works in his native language, which he possessed in perfection, and which had arrived, under the management of him and his contemporary, at the standard of classic elegance. Though he writes with spirit, abounds with striking and solid sentiments, and displays no inconsiderable share of learning, yet he cannot be called a good Latin writer. His style is harsh and uncouth; his sentences rugged and unpolished. There is a singularity and uncouthness of manner which sets him at a remote distance from the classics, and proves that he inspected their works rather for their matter than their mode of treating it. At the same time there is a native force and vivacity, which would have constituted distinguished excellence, if the writer had condescended to have become an imitator of the ancients. An affectation of originality has often spoiled an ingenious work, by rendering it quaint and disgustful. The greatest beauty of his prosaic writings, and a very exalted excellence it must be esteemed, is the serious regard which he pays to piety and morality, and that spirit of philosophy, which, though of a melancholy kind, is just and solid.

A reader is doubly pleased when he can turn from the works of a distinguished writer to his life with equal complacency. In the life of Petrarch, we find a noble and sublime spirit, which induced him to prefer his muse, his love, and his independence, to the favour of a papal despot. It is, indeed, the glorious privilege of genius to seek and to find its happiness from its own resources. Emboldened by the consciousness of its own strength, and feeling an indignation at many of the changes and chances of this world, and at the contumely of the proud and stupid, it is apt to spurn

at worthless grandeur, and to despise those whom the multitude adores.

Human nature must always have an object suspended in its view. The lovely Laura was the object of Petrarch. The passion was romantic; the idea of her excellence imaginary; but it had a happy influence on the poet's mind. It called forth the latent fire of his genius, it exercised his fine fancy; and, though the poet pours his plaintive verse in strains which affect our sympathy, yet we are by no means to consider him as unhappy. For it is a truth collected from long observation on human nature, that the pleasure of the chase consists in the pursuit, not in the attainment; and that it is often better to expect than to enjoy.

I believe it is not on record, or even suspected, that the passion of Petrarch was criminally gratified. It is generally thought that it began and terminated in imagination. But yet it is impossible not to lament, that the object of the poet's fanciful idolatry was one on which he could not innocently place his affections.

No. XCIX.

ON THE FOLLY AND WICKEDNESS OF WAR.

THE calamities attendant on a state of war seem to have prevented the mind of man from viewing it in the light of an absurdity, and an object of ridicule as well as pity. But if we could suppose a superior being capable of beholding us miserable mortals without compassion, there is, I think, very little doubt but the variety of military manœuvres and formalities, the pride, pomp, and circumstance of war, and all the ingenious contrivances for the glorious purposes of mutual destruction, which seem to constitute the business of many whole kingdoms, would furnish him with an entertainment like that which is received by us from the exhibition of a farce or a puppet-show. But, not-

withstanding the ridiculousness of all these solemnities, we, poor mortals, are doomed to feel that they are no farce, but the concomitant circumstances of a most woful tragedy.

The causes of war are for the most part such as must disgrace an animal pretending to rationality. Two poor mortals take offence at each other, without any reason, or with the very bad one of wishing for an opportunity of aggrandizing themselves by making reciprocal depredations. The creatures of the court, and the leading men of the nation, who are usually under the influence of the court, resolve (for it is their interest) to support their royal master, and are never at a loss to invent some colourable pretence for engaging rival nations in the horrors of war. Taxes of the most burthensome kind are levied, soldiers are collected, so as to leave a paucity of husbandmen; reviews and encampments succeed, and at last a hundred thousand men meet on a plain, and coolly shed each other's blood, without the smallest personal animosity, or the shadow of a provocation. The kings, in the mean time, and the grandees, who have employed these poor innocent victims to shoot bullets at each other's heads, remain quietly at home, and amuse themselves in the intervals of balls, hunting schemes, and pleasures of every species, with reading at the fire-side, over a cup of chocolate, the despatches from the army, and the news in the Extraordinary Gazette. Horace very truly observes, that whatever mad frolics enter into the heads of kings, it is the common people, that is, the honest artizan and the industrious tribes in the middle ranks, unoffended and unoffending, who chiefly suffer in the evil consequences. If the old king of Prussia had not been at the head of some of the best troops in the universe, he would have been judged more worthy of being tried, cast, and

condemned at the Old Bailey, than any shedder of blood who ever died by a halter. But he was a king; but he was a hero:—those names fascinate us, and we enrol the butcher of mankind among their benefactors.

When one considers the dreadful circumstances that attend even victories, one cannot help being shocked at the exultation which they occasion. I have often thought it a laughable scene, if there were not a little too much of the melancholy in it, when a circle of eager politicians have met to congratulate each other on what is called a piece of good news just arrived. Every eye sparkles with delight; every voice is raised in announcing the happy event. And what is the cause of all this joy? and for what are our windows illuminated, bonfires kindled, bells rung, and feasts celebrated? We have had a successful engagement. We have left two thousand of the enemy dead on the field of battle, and only half the number of our countrymen. Charming news! it was a glorious battle! But before you give a loose to your raptures, pause a while; and consider, that to every one of these three thousand, life was no less sweet than it is to you; that to the far greater part of them there probably were wives, fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, sisters, brothers, and friends, all of whom are at this moment bewailing that event which occasions your foolish and brutal triumph; a triumph perfectly consistent with the basest cowardice.

The whole time of war ought to be a time of general mourning; a mourning in the heart, a mourning much more sincere than on the death of one of those princes whose accursed ambition is often the sole cause of war. Indeed, that a whole people should tamely submit to the evils of war, because it is the will of a few vain, selfish, ignorant, though exalted, individuals, is a phenomenon almost unaccountable.

But they are led away by false glory, by their passions, by their vices. They reflect not; and indeed if they did reflect and oppose, what would avail the opposition of unarmed myriads to the mandate of a government supported by a standing army? Many of the European nations are entirely military; war is their trade; and when they have no employment at home, or near it, they blush not to let themselves out to shed any blood, in any cause, to the best paymaster. Ye beasts of the forest, no longer allow that man is your superior, while there is found on the face of the earth such degeneracy!

Morality and religion forbid war in its motives, conduct, and consequences; but to many rulers and potentates morality and religion appear as the inventions of politicians to facilitate subordination. The principal objects of crowned heads, and their minions, in countries subject to despotism, are the extension of empire, the augmentation of a revenue, or the total annihilation of their subjects' liberty. Their restraints in the pursuit of these objects are not those of morality and religion, but solely reasons of state and political caution. Plausible words are used, but they are used only to hide the deformity of the real principles. Wherever war is deemed desirable in an interested view, a specious pretext never yet remained unfound. Morality is as little considered in the beginning as in the prosecution of war. The most solemn treaties and engagements are violated by the governing part of the nation, with no more scruple than oaths and bonds are broken by a cheat and a villain in the walks of private life. Does the difference of rank and situation make any difference in the atrocity of crimes? If any, it renders a thousand times more criminal than that of a thief, the villany of them, who, by violating every sacred obligation between nation and nation, give rise

to miseries and mischiefs most dreadful in their nature, and to which no human power can say, Thus far shall ye proceed, and no farther. Are not the natural and moral evils of life sufficient, but they must be rendered more acute, more numerous, and more imbittered by artificial means? My heart bleeds over those complicated scenes of woe, for which no epithet can be found sufficiently descriptive. Language fails in labouring to express the horrors of war amid private families, who are so unfortunate as to be situated on the seat of it.

War, however, it will be said, has always been permitted by Providence. This is indeed true; but it has been permitted only as a scourge. Let a spirit and activity be exerted in regulating the morals of a nation, equal to that with which war, and all its apparatus, are attended to, and mankind will no longer be scourged; neither will it be necessary to evacuate an empire of its members, for none will be superfluous. Let us, according to the advice of a pious divine of the present age, think less of our fleets and armies, and more of our faith and practice. While we are warriors, with all our pretensions to civilisation, we are savages. But be it remembered, that nothing in this essay, or in any other composition of its author, was ever intended, or could be fairly understood, to discountenance a truly just and necessary WAR OF DEFENCE. Wanton and offensive war is the subject of his reprehension.

No. C.

ON THE EFFECTS OF INTEMPERATE STUDY ON THE HEALTH; AND ON THE DUTY OF PAYING REGARD TO THE PRESERVATION OF HEALTH.

THERE is in general but little danger lest good qualities and habits should be carried to excess. The moralist may, for the most part, recommend every

laudable and useful practice without prescribing any boundaries to proficiency. The probability is, that men will stop on this side, and not that they will go beyond the line of duty. But yet it is certain, that there are some ingenuous spirits, who, actuated by a generous emulation, advance in the pursuit of a favourite excellence with so immoderate an ardour and assiduity of application, as at once frustrates their purpose, injures their abilities, and destroys their happiness.

As I have, then, on many occasions, urged a very close attention to study, I think myself obliged, by motives of humanity, to suggest a few cautions which may prevent the evils of an intemperate application. I should indeed greatly lament, that any thing I have advanced in recommending to youth the cultivation of the mind, should lead them to neglect or injure that body on which the vigour of the mind greatly depends, and which, if it is disordered, often renders all other means of happiness and improvement ineffectual.

I am indeed the more inclined to enter on this subject, as I have seen very melancholy instances of nervous diseases entirely occasioned by intemperance in study, and its necessary concomitant, want of air and exercise. It is one circumstance peculiarly unhappy in these most unhappy of all diseases, that they seldom admit of a cure, and therefore great and early vigilance should be exerted in their prevention.

A great student ought to be particularly attentive to the regulation of his diet. We learn from the writings of physicians, that the labour of the brain draws off those spirits which are necessary to promote digestion. The least and the lightest food under which we can possibly be easy, according to the advice of the celebrated Cheney, is particularly proper for the student. Such a diet will not only render the spirits cheerful, and invigorate all the faculties of the

mind, but enable us to enjoy health with but a small share of exercise. Abstinence may however be carried to a destructive excess, and cause a fatal debility.

Exercise is to be taken on every opportunity. But a solitary walk or ride merely for the sake of exercise, and with no other object to stimulate our progress, as it is of all amusements the dullest, so it is often found rather hurtful than advantageous. The mind still meditates in solitude, and the body at the same time labours; so that both are exhausted at once; and the student returns to his closet, fatigued, dejected, and disappointed. Some little amusement must therefore be contrived, or some business engaged in, which may operate as a loadstone in attracting us, whithout being sensible of our own efforts, from our libraries, up the mountain, and along the forest, where Health, with all her thousand joys, delights to fix her abode. A few cheerful companions in our walks will render them abundantly more healthful; for, according to the ancient adage, they will serve instead of a carriage, or, in other words, prevent the sensation of fatigue.

Dejection of spirits is a certain consequence of intemperate study; but dejection of spirits, long continued, cannot consist with health. After a morning spent in a closer application than common, it will be right to devote the rest of the day to good company and innocent pleasures. Music is one of those pleasures, and the most delightful soother of the wearied mind. The heart dances at the sound of the lyre; fresh spirits animate the veins; the clouds of dejection are dissipated, and the soul shines out once more, like the sun after a mist in the blue expanse of æther.

Nocturnal studies, too long and too closely continued, seldom fail to injure the eyes, and, together with them, the whole nervous system. They who are

impelled by necessity to work by night and by day, must, indeed, submit with patience to their destiny; but that he who is master of his time should chain himself down to a more exhausting toil than the labour of the galley-slave, is a species of folly approaching to insanity. And, indeed, I know of nothing more likely to produce madness than intemperate study, with want of exercise, want of air, and want of sleep. It will, after all, be but a poor comfort to have gone through a whole library, and to have lost our eyes and our senses in the course of the laborious progress.

Every man of sense will make use of all the known methods of securing his health, were it merely on selfish motives, and for the sake of preserving his faculties and prolonging his life. But, omitting all selfish regards, I cannot help thinking that an attention to the preservation of health is an IMPORTANT DUTY. I do not recollect that it has often been recommended as a duty. But, since our health is greatly in our own power; since we all enter into the world to engage in many active and necessary employments, and since the want of health will render us incapable of them; I cannot help thinking that the care of our health may be numbered among the duties of indispensable obligation. A sound constitution of body is a blessing of Heaven; and not to bestow the utmost vigilance in preserving a pearl of so inestimable a price, is a contempt of the gift, an insult on the Giver, and a species of impious ingratitude.

It is commonly said, that he who wants the advice of physicians in the regulation of his usual diet, after the age of forty, wants also understanding; a defect which no physician can supply. It is indeed certain, that, at the age of forty, a sufficient degree of experience of what may be agreeable or disagreeable to the constitution may have been collected. But few of

us are willing to do all that we are able; few of us are so attentive, in the first portion of life, to the animal economy as to remark with accuracy the causes of those slight indispositions which are occasioned by accidental excess in the gay and thoughtless hours of convivial enjoyment. We participate in the pleasures of the table from friendly and benevolent motives, however they may undermine the constitution. We are apt to think, that it would be too selfish to refuse to partake of the enjoyments of others merely to preserve our own health. The midnight assembly and the luxurious banquet are often less sought for their own sakes, than from good-nature and a social disposition. But, perhaps, if we considered that we are not taking care of ourselves merely on our own account, but for others, for our parents and our children, for our friends and for the public, we should not deem a scrupulous regard to health, though it may lead us to avoid the feast and the revel, either ungenerous or unsocial. It would appear in the light of a very serious duty, derived from an obedience to the will of Heaven, and from the regard we owe to our neighbour; and we should be obliged to confess, that the nominal pleasures of excess ought always to give place to the concerns of social and relative duty.

A scrupulous regard to health is, indeed, a duty incumbent on all; but, perhaps, more particularly to be attended to by the learned and ingenious, as they are of all the most subject to indisposition. A delicate frame is very often associated with a strong intellect; and a life of study, though a life of labour, is not adapted, like that of the manual labourer, to give elasticity to the nerves, or vigour to the animal functions. But excessive eating, added to excessive study, must wear the machine much more than the substance of which it is constituted can long endure. If it is

not soon broken in pieces, its wheels will be clogged, its springs broken, and the whole rendered useless and burthensome. It is recorded of Mr. Pope, that he was an immoderate eater, that he kept a silver saucepan to dress dainties for himself in the intervals of his meals, and that he died of a saucepan of lampreys.

Whatever part of the system of human affairs we examine, one truth appears to pervade the whole complicated mass, which is, that there can be neither wisdom, nor happiness, nor even enjoyment of the subordinate kinds, independently of moderation. In the most refined and elevated part of our conduct and pursuits, the same truth is no less visible than in the lower occupations of common life. Sweet are the pleasures of contemplation, delightful the exercise of the mind in reading and reflection; but no pleasure, however pure, must be invariably pursued, till we are removed into the world of spirits, and are enabled to enjoy intellectual delights unalloyed and uninterrupted.

No. CI.

ON THE PRESENT STATE OF CONVERSATION.

There is, perhaps, no method of improving the mind more efficacious, and certainly none more agreeable, than a mutual interchange of sentiments in an elegant and animated conversation with the judicious, the learned, and the communicative. Light and heat are elicited by the collision of minds. Truths which appeared dull in the solitude of the study are no sooner agitated in conversation, than they affect the mind with the liveliest sensibility. And it is one circumstance which, in a peculiar manner, recommends the mode of improvement by mutual discourse, that the social affections are no less powerfully exerted and

exercised than the powers of reason. By the display of both, the heart and the understanding are at once improved.

Such would be the description of him who should derive his ideas on the subject from a chosen few, or from his books. But let him consider conversation as it really appears in the living world, independently of theoretical and speculative refinement, and I fear, that, instead of finding it always attended with improvement, it will often appear to him either very dull, or a fertile source of corruption and degeneracy.

A young man who has just left his school, full of the ideas which the poets, philosophers, and historains of antiquity supply, will probably bid adieu to many of them at the same time that he takes leave of his tutor; unless, indeed, his own choice should lead him to cultivate an acquaintance with them in private. Suppose him to pass from the school to a university. There, if he has spirit, he will of course seek the company, and imitate the manners, of those who possess a like spirit, and who are also celebrated as men of fashion. The conversation will, therefore, turn upon the subject of horses, dogs, drinking, dressing, debauchery, of cajoling the old gentleman at home out of his money, to be spent in these laudable purposes, or of running in debt with credulous and unfortunate tradesmen. Such will be the sublime contemplations and the philosophical topics of discourse among the young students in the famed academic groves on the banks of the Cam and the Isis, and in the schools of science and theology.

What, indeed, are the methods of passing time among persons of the best repute and genteelest condition, while they think it indispensably necessary to move in the vortex of fashion? Nothing grave, nothing abstruse, nothing speculative. There is evidently an

uneasiness, a silence, an awkwardness, a vacuity, till cards are introduced. It is not a harsh delineation of modern manners to assert, that in general, and even among those who certainly have a right to esteem, there appears to be no taste for any thing that deserves the name of refined and ingenious conversation. The time of a visit is for the most part spent in repeating the doubtful news of the day; in mere chat without consequence or connexion; in eating, drinking, and crowning the whole with a few rubbers. All this may be very innocent and pleasant as a relaxation; and the only point I maintain is, that the species of conversation from which improvement is to be derived is not often found in the present system of visiting and conversing.

I know not whether our youth, were he to seek the society of men in the professions, would be certain of finding that sort of converse from which philosophers inform us so much moral and intellectual improvement is received. If such be the case, we are not to wonder that it is rarely to be found in the common ranks, who are often too deficient in education to be able to interchange their sentiments with any considerable advantage to the mind or the morals.

It is said, that a celebrated wit had sought the company of Addison with uncommon solicitude, and with a hope of being delighted with that fine humour which is so conspicuous in his writings; but that Addison did not talk, though he paid it off in drinking, which he did so intemperately, that nature was obliged to throw off her load: upon which circumstance, the visitor, on his departure, remarked, that no good thing had come out of his mouth that night but the wine. Let it, however, be remembered by those who bring such instances in their own justification, that the cause of Addison's taciturnity was a natural diffidence in the company of

strangers, to dismiss which he took his glass more freely than he might otherwise have done; and that, among a chosen few, his conversation was at once improving and delightful.

In some circles it is possible to be a very excellent companion without uttering a single sentiment, or a single word more than is necessary to repeat the toast. In these, indeed, the wit of a Swift, the humour of a Quin, and the fine philosophical spirit of an Addison, would not be deemed half so agreeable as the good-natured ease of him who counts no hours, but silently sits, and inhales and exhales, through a tube of clay, the smoke of tobacco. If such persons are philosophers, one might guess from their taciturnity that they are the disciples of Pythagoras.

In the lower ranks of mankind we must not expect refinement. Liberal and ingenious ideas must have been collected by reading, before conversation can be advanced to the perfection of which it is capable. We readily, therefore, pardon those defects which could not easily have been supplied. We are not surprised at ribaldry, noise, and nonsense, in the society of the vulgar, and those who seek relief from bodily labour in coarse mirth and unselected society. But that persons who have improved their reason, and who have leisure for all the refinements of intellectual pleasure, should neglect the means of so much advantage and satisfaction as might be derived from conversation properly conducted, is an additional instance of our folly in disregarding the most obvious means of improving our happiness and our condition.

I know it may be said, that, as relaxation is often the principal object of our mutual intercourse, to render conversation a study, and the effect of care and meditation, is to defeat its purpose. But let it be remembered, that the improvements in conversation which I

recommend contribute no less to increase the pleasure than the advantage of it. I recommend no stiffness, no improper solemnity, or disagreeable formality; but ease, elegance, politeness, united with sense, taste, learning, and with a communicative disposition. Cards are not disapproved in general; nothing, however light, while it is innocent, is totally prohibited; and all that I contend for is, that where circumstances admit, and in a proper alternation, literature, the fine arts, natural and moral philosophy, history, and whatever exercises the better powers of the understanding, should contribute to fill up the many hours which we usually spend in company. These things would often preclude insipidity, scandal, gaming, and intemperance. Such would be their valuable effects, considered only negatively. But they would do more: they would exalt and refine the human mind, and would prove what man so often boasts, without exhibiting sufficient proofs of it, that he is an animal not only social, but rational.

No. CII.

ON GOODNESS OF HEART.

WHOEVER has made accurate observations on men and manners will easily perceive that the praise of goodness of heart is usually accompanied with an oblique insinuation of intellectual imbecility. I believe him to be a well-meaning man, says the malignant panegyrist, and if there is any fault in him, it will be found rather in his head than in his heart. Nothing could be better contrived by a crafty and envious world to render the amiable quality, good-nature, contemptible, than to represent it as the effect or as the companion of folly.

It is, indeed, true, that innocence and integrity are usually accompanied with simplicity; not, however,

with that sort of simplicity which is sometimes synonymous with folly; but with a generosity and openness of heart, which had rather lose its objects than obtain them by deceit; which leads the tongue boldly to speak what the heart honestly conceives. If we weigh the satisfactions of an open and upright conduct, of a clear conscience, and of that liberty which we enjoy by thinking, speaking, and acting, without mean and servile restraints, it will, I believe, be found, that this simplicity is true wisdom, and that the cunning of the worldly wise is real and egregious imprudence.

Goodness of heart, whether it be a natural or acquired goodness, is indeed, in every respect, the highest excellence. It is the only quality which can rescue human nature from the disgrace and misery of its wretched weaknesses, and its powerful tendencies to evil. It raises the poor worm that otherwise crawls on a dunghill, and stings and bites his wretched companions, to an exalted place in the scale of being, and causes him to assimilate with the divine nature.

I shall exhibit to my youthful readers, whose hearts are yet susceptible of whatever bias they choose to give them, two characters; in one of which appeared goodness of heart, and in the other worldly wisdom or cunning, or the art of pleasing for the sake of profit. If any one should hesitate in choosing whether of the two shall be his model, he need not hesitate at beginning a reformation of himself, for he may depend upon it, that his own heart stands greatly in need of amendment.

Serpens (for such let us suppose to be his name) has persuaded himself that he sees farther into things than the rest of his species. He considers religion as priestcraft, morality as the invention of politicians, and taste and literature as the amusement of fools. His philosophy, and all his better pursuits and ideas, are cir-

cumscribed within limits extremely narrow. Pleasure and interest are his chief good, his only objects of serious pursuit; and in the attainment of these he is not scrupulously delicate. There is, indeed, no virtue or good quality, the appearance of which he does not assume; because, while mankind are weak enough to judge and esteem men according to moral and religious prejudices, a plausible appearance is essentially necessary to success in life. External decency is his highest aim. Sincerity or sound principles would but retard his purposes. Compassion he never felt, and is equally a stranger to love and friendship, though he is always professing them to persons of fortune and distinction, whom he idolizes with religious adoration; and this is the only sentiment which he feels bordering upon religion.

By a life spent in abject servility, in courting a capricious world, in deceiving the credulous, in contriving schemes of advantage or pleasure, and in hardening his conscience, he has, at last, in his fiftieth year, obtained some promotion, and accumulated a handsome sum of money. But he cannot enjoy it, now he is possessed of it. The same greedy selfishness which taught him to debase his soul in pursuing interest and private gratification, still operates on his conduct, and renders him a complete miser. Though he has long enjoyed a competency, he never had spirit enough to marry. He was afraid of the expense. He hates his relations, because he thinks they expect his fortune at his decease. He has made no real friends, though he has deceived thousands by professing friendship for the easier accomplishment of his dirty designs. All the neighbours detest him; and he envies every one of them who appears to be happier than himself, which, indeed, they all do; for his heart is torn with malignity, with fears, anxities, and covetousness. He bears, however,

the character of a shrewd and sensible man; one who knows the world, and learned at an early age to make it his bubble. His advice is considered as an oracle in pecuniary business; and no attorney would be half so much consulted, if he did not render himself almost inaccesible by the moroseness of his temper. As, in his youth he was all submission and gentleness, and perfectly skilled in the celebrated art of pleasing; so now, when the mask is no longer necessary, his natural disposition breaks out in all its horrid deformity. But the misery which he occasions to all around him falls upon himself, by the just retribution of Providence. The heart which has been the receptacle of every vice and every meanness, is always the seat of uneasy sensation. The stupid insensibility with respect to the finer feelings, which usually characterizes that sort of shrewd men who are celebrated in the world as men who know things so well, may, indeed, guard them from pungent affliction; but it is itself a curse most devoutly to be deprecated.

Simplicius was the son of parents remarkable for the piety and regularity of their lives. He received a liberal education in its most comprehensive form, and found every moral instruction which he derived from books, and from his preceptor, confirmed by example at home. All his delicate sensibilities were gradually nursed to a state of perfection by the innocence and temperance of his life; by the piety and virtue of his family, in which such respect was paid to him while a boy, that not a word that could convey a loose or improper idea was ever uttered in his presence. He married early, and obeyed the dictates of his heart in selecting a most amiable woman, of beauty, sense, and temper, but of little or no fortune. The shrewd and wise men of the world laughed and pitied. Simplicius, however, had never any reason to repent. His children are his chief

delight; but he loves his friends with sincere and unalterable affection; and there is no species of distress which he does not pity and relieve to the best of his power. The amiableness of his manners, and the regularity of his conduct, gave him the advantage of character, the want of which can seldom be supplied by any worldly policy. With this powerful recommendation he has made his way to eminence, and enjoys his success with the truest relish. It is, indeed, unimbittered by any consciousness of sinister modes in securing it. He always proceeded in the straight road of common sense and honesty. He knew of no obliquities; for, indeed, he found the art of life very plain and easy, and by no means such as requires the precepts of a Chesterfield. His heart and his understanding are both excellent, and, co-operating with each other, have conducted him to happiness through the flowery paths of innocence. His own bosom has been a perpetual spring of agreeable sensations to himself, and to all who were so fortunate as to be allied to him by kindred, by affinity, by acquaintance, or in the course of his negociations. A good conscience will cause the evening of life to close in the sweetest serenity, as the day has been distinguished by unclouded sunshine.

Whatever the short-sighted votaries of avarice and ambition may assert, there is no doubt but that real goodness of heart is the noblest ornament of human nature, and the least fallible source of permanent satisfaction. I have often therefore lamented, that, in the course of what is called a liberal education, very little attention has been paid at our best schools to the culture of the heart. While good seeds have been sown in the understanding, the heart has been suffered to be overrun with weeds and briars. In truth, learning and abilities, without goodness of heart, constitute that kind of

wisdom which is foolishness in the sight of reason and of God. Without goodness of heart, man, however accomplished, is so far from being but a little lower than the angels, that he is scarcely above the accursed spirits, and by no means equal to many of the brutes, dogs in particular, who often exhibit most amiable instances of a good heart in the virtues of gratitude, sincere affection, and fidelity.

No. CIII.

ON THE CHARACTERS OF THEOPHRASTUS.

If portraits of the ancient Athenians, painted from the life by the artists of the times, had descended to the present age, they would have attracted universal notice, and have been justly considered as invaluable. The productions, however, of the pencil are not proof against the corrosions of time; but though we have no original pictures of the persons of the ancient Athenians, we have admirable sketches of their minds delineated by Theophrastus. I do not mean descriptions of heroes, philosophers, or poets. They are to be found in the writings of the historian. Theophrastus has taken his pictures from private and common life; from persons too obscure to adorn the page of history, but who constitute subjects well adapted to the purpose of him who studies the anatomy of human nature. It is, indeed, extremely curious and amusing to discover strokes of character in the citizens of Athens, who lived above two thousand years ago, exactly similar to the manners of the present day, as they appear in London, and in other part of civilised Europe.

Theophrastus entered on the undertaking of delineating the characters of his countrymen at the advanced age of eighty-nine; an age at which he had treasured up a multitude of ideas from converse and observation. His design was to stigmatize follies, foibles, and little

vices, rather than atrocious crimes. He meant, as he informs us himself in his preface, that posterity should learn, from the patterns which he should leave them, to judge of characters with accurate discrimination, and to select such persons for friendship and acquaintance as might communicate excellence equal to their own, by exciting a spirit of generous emulation.

I will transcribe a single extract for the amusement of my reader, desiring him to bear in mind the idea, that the writer of the character, and the person characterized, lived above three hundred years before the Christian æra. It will also be proper, in order to receive all the pleasure which the perusal of Theophrastus is capable of affording, that the reader should consider whether many features of the character have not fallen under his own observation.

The following passage is taken from his section on the Art of Pleasing, and shows that this boasted art, as it is now taught, is no modern discovery, but is at all times the genuine offspring of meanness and self-interest.

"The art of pleasing," says he, "is a kind of behaviour in the company of another, which tends, indeed, to give pleasure, but not for the best of purposes. The person who studies it is such a one as, after having saluted a man a great way off, and called him the best man in the world, and admired him sufficiently, takes him by both his hands, and will not let him go; but, accompanying him a little way, asks when he shall have the pleasure of seeing him again; nor does he take leave, after all, without a thousand compliments and praises. When he is called in as an arbitrator, he is not only desirous of pleasing the party on whose side he appears, but the adversary also, that he may seem to be the common friend of both. He tells a foreign gentleman that he really speaks the

language with a better accent than the natives. When he is invited to dinner, he insists upon the gentleman's letting the little children come in; and the moment he sees them, he declares, they are more like their father than one fig is like another; and, taking them by the hand, he kisses them, and makes them sit next to him, and plays with them himself, saying, here is a little trinket for one, and here is a little hatchet for the other: and he lets them fall asleep on his lap, seeming to be highly delighted, though he sits on thorns all the while. He shaves his face very often; he keeps his teeth accurately clean; lays aside his clothes, even while they are good, because the fashion is changed, and takes care to be perfumed with the best perfume. In all public places he is seen talking, or sitting, with the principal persons, &c." It is not consistent with my design to fill my paper with citations, or it would be easy to produce many ancient pieces from this moral painter which deserve to be highly esteemed on account of their age and curiosity. The paintings, it must be owned, are rather in the Flemish style, and many of them partake of the caricatura.

But though I commend the pieces as curiosities I would by no means be understood to praise them as perfect, or as standards for imitation. Whether they have undergone mutilation or transposition, or whether the author, in extreme old age, had not spirits to review what he wrote, it is not easy to determine: but it is certain, that there is often a total want of connexion, and that many strokes are admitted not at all descriptive of the character to which they are applied. Indeed, it appears probable that the characters were real ones, and the remarks personal. So that, though the author began with a general foible or folly, yet, pursuing the model from which he drew in all its parts, he was led, by an accurate delineation of the whole, to

some peculiarities not at all connected with the predominant features of the general character described.

With respect to the style of this little book, I cannot discover any beauties so peculiarly striking as could induce Aristotle to change the author's name from Tyrtamus to that of Theophrastus. There were, however, it is probable, in his other works, some very distinguished excellencies of diction, since they procured him, from one of the best critics whom the world ever saw, a name, which signified that he expressed himself like a god. Diogenes Laertius informs us, that he wrote no fewer than two hundred and twenty books; but scarcely any of them have escaped the hand of envious Time. The characters, we may venture to imagine, are greatly mutilated, and many of them lost. It is, indeed, supposed, that as in this treatise he has represented faults only, he wrote another, in which he presented to the view the more amiable picture of virtuous and agreeable characters. Very high commendations are paid to his Treatise on Plants and Stones; but it is but little read, since the great improvements which have been made by the moderns in all sorts of science. Upon the whole of his characters, Casaubon appears to have remarked, with justice, that he was worthy of that age which produced the glorious triumvirate, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.

Many commentaries have been written to facilitate the reading of the characters; but I cannot help thinking, that this is one of the few ancient books, in the illustration of which learning is less necessary than a knowledge of the world.

No. CIV.

ON SEVERAL PASSAGES IN THE ENCHIRIDION OR MANUAL OF EPICTETUS.

THERE is scarcely any of the philosophical sects which has not adopted some absurdity amidst a great variety of wise and valuable doctrine. Like all inventors and selectors of their own systems, they have been hurried to excess, and have disgraced the rational parts of their philosophy by far-fetched refinements, or by foolish tenets, which could originate only in the madness of enthusiasm. The Stoical system, beautiful and noble as it is in a general view, abounds with blemishes which have almost rendered it contemptible. It may, indeed, be said, in vindication of them, that they have a tendency to raise and strengthen human nature, while the errors of many other systems tend only to indulge its passions, and to increase its infirmity.

I shall present my reader with a few extracts from the admirable Enchiridion of Epictetus; divesting them of the absurd doctrines, and retaining only what is really practicable and interesting to mankind at large, independently of any philosophical system. The passages are well known to the learned, to whose notice it would be superfluous to address them. They are more particularly intended for the use of the young, and of those who, from their engagements in active or commercial life, have not time for the study of Epictetus. Readers of this description will, I hope, find them not only very curious, but useful specimens of heathen wisdom. I shall transcribe the few passages, which the limits of my paper will admit, from the translation of a lady, who has long done honour to her sex, and to English literature.

"Require not things to happen as you wish; but wish them to happen as they do happen, and you will go on well.

"Remember that you must behave in life as at an entertainment. Is any thing brought round to you? Put out your hand, and take your share with moderation. Does it pass by you? Do not stop it. Is it not yet come? Do not stretch forth your desire towards it, but wait till it reaches you. Thus do with regard to children, to a wife, to public posts, to riches; and you will be, some time or other, a worthy partner of the feasts of the gods.

"Remember that you are an actor in a drama, of such kind as the author pleases to make it. If short, of a short one; if long, of a long one. If it be his pleasure you should act a poor man, a cripple, a governor, or a private person, see that you act it naturally. For this is your business, to act well the character assigned you: to choose it is another's.

"If you have an earnest desire of attaining to philosophy, prepare yourself from the very first to be laughed at, to be sneered by the multitude, to hear them say, 'He is returned to us a philosopher all at once,' and, 'Whence this supercilious look?' Now, for your part, do not have a supercilious look indeed; but still keep steadily to those things which appear best to you, as one appointed by God to this station. For, remember, if you adhere to the same point, those very persons who at first ridiculed will afterwards admire you; but if you are conquered by them, you will incur a double ridicule.

"When a neighbour's boy has had a slight accident, broken a cup for instance, we are presently ready to say, 'These are things that will happen.' Be assured, then, that when your own cup likewise is broken, you ought to be affected just as when another's cup is broken. Transfer this in like manner to other things. Is the child or wife of another dead? There is not one who would not say, 'This is an accident to which

human nature is liable.' But if any one's own child happens to die, it is presently, 'Alas, how wretched am I!' But it should be remembered, how we are affected on hearing the same thing concerning others.

"If a person had delivered up your body to any one whom he had met in the way, you would certainly be angry. And do you feel no shame in delivering up your own mind to be disconcerted and confounded by any one who happens to give you ill language?

"Duties are universally measured by relations. Is any one a father? In this are implied, as due, taking care of him, submitting to him in all things, patiently receiving his reproaches, his correction. But he is a bad father. Is your natural tie, then, to a good father? No: but to a father. Is a brother unjust? Well, preserve your own situation towards him: consider not what he does, but what you are to do. In this manner you will find, from the idea of a neighbour, a citizen, a general, the corresponding duties, if you accustom yourselves to contemplate the several relations.

"It is incumbent on every one to offer libations and sacrifices, conformably to the customs of his country, with purity, and not in a slovenly manner, nor negligently, nor beyond his ability.

"Immediately prescribe some character and form of behaviour to yourself, which you may preserve, both alone and in company.

"We must not discourse on any of the common subjects of gladiators, or horse-races, or athletic champions, or feasts, the vulgar topics of conversation; but principally not of men, so as either to blame or praise, or make comparisons. If you are able, by your own conversation, bring over that of your company to proper subjects; but, if you happen to be taken among persons of ideas totally different from yours, be silent.

"Let not your laughter be much, nor on many

occasions, nor profuse. Avoid swearing, if possible, altogether; if not, as far as you are able.

"Avoid public and vulgar entertainments; but, if ever an occasion calls you to them, keep your attention upon the stretch, that you may not imperceptibly slide into vulgar manners. For be assured, that, if a person be ever so sound himself, yet if his companion be infected, he who converses with him will be infected likewise.

"Before marriage preserve yourself pure; but do not, therefore, be troublesome, and full of reproofs to those who are licentious, nor frequently boast that you yourself are not.

"If any person tells you, that such a person speaks ill of you, do not make excuses about what is said of you, but answer; 'He does not know my other faults, else he would not have mentioned only these.'

"In parties of conversation, avoid a frequent and excessive mention of your own actions and dangers; for, however agreeable it may be to yourself to mention the risques you have run, it is not equally agreeable to others to hear your adventures. Avoid likewise an endeavour to excite laughter; for this is a slippery point, which may throw you into vulgar manners; and besides, may be apt to lessen you in the esteem of your acquaintance. Approaches to indecent discourse are likewise dangerous. Whenever, therefore, any thing of this sort happens, if there be a proper opportunity, rebuke him who makes advances that way; or, at least by silence and blushing, and a forbidding look, show yourself displeased by such talk.

"If you are struck by the appearance of any promised pleasure, guard yourself against being hurried away by it; but let the affair wait your leisure, and procure yourself some delay. Then bring to your mind both points of time; that in which you shall en-

joy the pleasure, and that in which you will repent and reproach yourself, after you have enjoyed it: and set before you, in opposition to these, how you will rejoice and applaud yourself, if you abstain. And even though it should appear to you a seasonable gratification, take heed that its enticing, and agreeable, and attractive force may not subdue you; but set in opposition to this, how much better it is to be conscious of having gained so great a victory.

"When you do any thing from a clear judgment that it ought to be done, never shun the being seen to do it, even though the world should make a wrong supposition about it; for, if you do not act right, shun the action itself; but if you do, why are you afraid of those who censure you wrongly?

"If you have assumed any character above your strength, you have both made an ill figure in that, and quitted one which you might have supported.

"Women, from fourteen years old, are flattered by the title of mistress by the men; therefore, perceiving that they are regarded as only qualified to give the men pleasure, they begin to adorn themselves, and in that to place all their hopes. It is worth while, therefore, to fix our attention on making them sensible that they are esteemed for nothing else but the appearance of a decent, and modest, and discreet behaviour.

"It is a mark of want of genius to spend much time in things relating to the body; as to be long in our exercises, in eating and drinking. These should be done incidentally and slightly, and our whole attention be engaged in the care of the understanding.

"Never call yourself a philosopher, nor talk a great deal among the unlearned about theorems; but act conformably to them. Thus, at entertainments, do not talk how persons ought to eat; but eat as you ought. There is great danger in immediately throw-

ing out what you have not digested. And if any one tells you, that you know nothing, and you are not nettled at it, then you may be sure that you have begun your business.

"Sheep do not produce the grass, to show how much they have eaten; but inwardly digesting their food, they outwardly produce wool and milk. Thus, therefore, do you likewise not show theorems to the unlearned, but the actions produced by them, after they have been digested.

"The condition and characteristic of a vulgar person are, that he never expects either benefit or hurt from himself, but from externals. The condition and characteristic of a philosopher are, that he expects all hurt and benefit from himself.

"Whatever rules you have deliberately proposed to yourself for the conduct of life, abide by them as so many laws, and as if you would be guilty of impiety in transgressing any of them; and do not regard what any one says of you, for this, after all, is no concern of yours. How long will you defer to think yourself worthy of the noblest improvements, and in no instance to transgress the distinctions of reason? You are no longer a boy, but a grown man. If therefore you will be negligent and slothful, and always add procrastination to procrastination, purpose to purpose, and fix day after day in which you will attend to yourself, you will insensibly continue without proficiency; and living and dying, persevere in being one of the vulgar. This instant, then, think yourself worthy of living as a man grown up, and a proficient. Let whatever appears to be the best, be to you an inviolable law. And if any instance of pain or pleasure, or glory or disgrace, be set before you, remember that now is the combat, now the Olympaid comes on, nor can it be put off; and that, by once being worsted, and giving way, profi-

ciency is lost; or, by the contrary, preserved. Thus Socrates became perfect, improving himself by every thing, attending to nothing but reason. And, though you are not yet a Socrates, you ought, however, to live as one desirious of becoming a Socrates.

"Upon all occasions we ought to have this saying of Socrates at hand: 'O Crito! if it thus pleases the gods, thus let it be! Anytus and Melitus may kill me indeed, but hurt me they cannot.'"

The conferences of Epictetus, from which, indeed, the Manual is in great measure collected, quaint as they appear, abound with pithy remarks, such as suggest much more to the mind of a reflecting reader than meets the ear. The gold, however, as it happens in the richest mines, is surrounded with much dross. The uncouth manner in which the conferences appear in a translation, however excellent, has deterred many from perusing them who would have found their perseverance amply rewarded. I cannot, therefore, help wishing, for the sake of liberal and studious young men, that all the valuable matter were extracted, and presented to their view, with accuracy; but, at the same time, with all the ornaments of an elegant and flowing diction. I should, indeed, think it an excellent mode of improving the minds and morals of those who are in the course of their education, if some one passage, like those cited above, were selected as a text or subject on which the preceptor might expatiate. For, next to the Scriptures themselves, the writings of the Stoics contribute most to raise and rescue human nature from the humiliation and wretchedness into which it is prone to fall by natural degeneracy, inherent weakness, and acquired corruption. They operate on the mind like those medicines on the body which are called bracers, or corroboratives; and surely that philosophy ought to be encouraged by

every moralist and statesman which adds nerves to virtue, and gives stability to empire.

No. CV.

ON SWEETNESS AND DELICACY OF STYLE.

As there is in some flowers an exquisite scent, and in some fruits a delicious flavour, to express which no language has a name; so there is in style a sweetness and a delicacy which eludes description, and can only be perceived by the sensibility of taste.

But though it may be difficult to analyse this agreeable quality, or to teach a writer how to infuse it into his works, yet it is by no means equally arduous to point out a few authors in whom both the observations of others, and our own feelings, have discovered it. This, indeed, is the only method of communicating it: and though it is not to be taught by didactic and formal precepts, it may be acquired by the contagious influence of a captivating example.

Sweetness is chiefly to be found in lyric poetry, but it is by no means confined to it. Though Vossius is of opinion that sweetness is peculiar to lyric, as gravity to the epic, simplicity to the pastoral, softness to the elegiac, jocularity to the comic, pathos to the tragic, bitterness to the satiric, and pungency to the epigrammatic; yet I rather think that they all admit, on some occasions, something of this captivating quality. Homer, who furnishes models of every style, often mixes, among his ruder beauties, a delicate sweetness of diction, which, besides its own inherent power of pleasing, embellishes all the rougher parts by the power of contrast.

Theocritus is all sweetness; and if a reader, with a good ear, should not understand the bard of Syracuse, he might still be delighted with the delicious honey of the Doric dialect.

Many of the little but elegant compositions in the Anthologiæ owe all their excellence to the selection of words which convey enchanting music to the ear. They seem, indeed, to trickle like liquid honey from the honeycomb, and this without any affectation in the writers; for such are the peculiar beauties of the Greek language, that it is difficult to write on subjects connected with pleasure, love, and beauty, without using such expressions as, besides their real meaning, excite an idea of sweetness, by their sound, similar in its melody to the object represented.

Sweetness is the peculiar excellence of the joyous bard of Teos. The bacchanalian songs of modern times partake very little of those delicate charms which distinguish a style truly Anacreontic. It does not indeed appear, that the modern bacchanals have thought it possible that their joys should admit of delicacy. The songs, therefore, which have been written to enliven and stimulate their mirth have usually been of a coarser kind, and such as necessarily excluded sweetness of composition. They seem to have considered a Bacchus as he is rudely represented on a sign-post, and not, as he is described by the poets and sculptors of antiquity, a most graceful and elegant figure. Anacreon, after all, like the Greek epigrammatists, must be acknowledged to owe much of his sweetness to a language which cannot be otherwise than sweet on certain subjects, without unnatural violence. The Latin language, though susceptible of peculiar delicacy, is certainly less capable of sweetness than the dialect of Athens, Ionia, and Doris. But still there are many authors in it who have derived much of the power of pleasing the human race, during near twenty centuries, from the singular sweetness of their style.

Catullus, I believe, deserves to be mentioned among

the first of those who have emulated the Greeks in their distinguished excellence. Few books would have been better calculated to give boys a true taste for sweet composition, if the decency of the poet's sentiments had been equal to the delicacy of his style. But it must be allowed that his honey has a poisonous quality.

Horace was a very Proteus in the circumstances of a versatile and variegated diction. His Odes abound with stanzas, and his other works with heroic verses, which evidently prove, that, if he had chosen to vie with Virgil in strength and dignity, he would have approached his rival. But he was a man of pleasure; and his favourite style is that in which he celebrates love and wine. In this there is a remarkable sweetness; and I know not whether the *curiosa felicitas*, or that charm of his writings which resulted from study and happiness united, may not be said to consist in delicacy of sentiment and suavity of expression. So delightful are the ninth ode of the fourth book, and the fourth of the third, that all readers have been charmed with them; and Julius Scaliger, a very warm critic, has asserted, that he had rather be the author of them than of all Pindar's odes, or than be elevated to the rank of a monarch. It is, I think, certain, that many of the odes of Horace, and many of the works of other poets of equal fame, have delighted mankind, from one generation to another, far less by the justness of the sentiments than by a sweetness of language, a delicate choice of words, and a well-modulated collocation.

The modest bard of Mantua indisputably owes his influence over the human mind to his talent in attempering, in a most judicious union, softness, sweetness, and the nicest delicacy, with the most majestic grandeur, the dignity of heroic language and virtue.

Among the prose writers of Greece and Rome, every reader of taste will immediately observe, that Hero-

dotus and Xenophon, Cæsar and Cicero, claim the first place in the excellence of a sweet style. The two Plinies and Paterculus have a considerable share of it. Thucydides, Sallust, and Tacitus, are too fond of austerity to admit any great portion of sweetness; yet they admit it occasionally.

Many of the modern Latin poets have distinguished themselves by the sweetness of their verse. Some of them have, however, carried it to excess, and have written in the worst manner of Grotius, Johannes Secundus, and Bonifonius. Sweetness ought to be distinguished from lusciousness: the one affects us with the sensations durably agreeable; the other quickly cloys and palls the appetite.

The eminent French writers, who certainly possess taste, have displayed a remarkable sweetness of style. The Italians can scarcely compose without displaying it. He who has formed a taste for this quality will find it fully gratified in the writings of Fontaine, Metastasio, and indeed in all the celebrated authors of France and Italy. Those nations, in modern times, have been more defective in strength and nerve than in any of the softer qualities, the purpose of which is to please, allure, and seduce.

Though the French are disposed to deny the English the praise of taste, I cannot help thinking, that we have writers who can rival them in their pretensions to taste and to every excellence which can adorn composition. Our Addison, like some of the most celebrated ancients, possesses that sweetness, that delicacy, and that grace, which is formed to please the human mind, under all the revolutions of time, of fashion, and of capricious taste. It is not only the excellent matter which produces the effect of gently composing our passions while we are reading Addison, but it is also that sweet style, which cannot be read and tasted

without communicating to the mind something of its own delightful equability. Sir William Temple was, indeed, the model of Addison, and he is remarkable for the sweetness of his style, especially if he is compared with the writers of his own time.

All our eminent poets have judiciously mingled sweetness with strength, and grace with dignity. Waller has usually obtained the praise of sweetness; but he has been greatly exceeded by his successors in this and every other species of poetry. If that sort of genius which constitutes a Homer, a Shakespeare, a Milton, has not been common among us, yet the subordinate species which is displayed in elegant mediocrity, and what we call pretty and pleasing opuscula, has no where more abounded; and suavity has been one of the excellencies principally pursued, and most easily attained.

It appears to me, that the later writers of prose have rather affected the masculine and nervous than the sweet and graceful. The author of Fitzosborne's Letters has exhibited, both grace and sweetness: and I wish they were not sometimes injured by verbosity. Johnson, Hawkesworth, Robertson, are chiefly admired for strength and force. Hume has now and then displayed something of Addisonian sweetness in a few of his moral essays, together with Addison's gentleness. It is to be wished he had displayed something of the Addisonian goodness of heart; but it must be allowed, that his flowers have often a poisonous quality. The Warburtonian school, as Hume called it, though it has produced ingenious and nervous writers, cannot boast either of sweetness or grace. It has delighted much in violent controversy and arbitrary dictation, both of which usually bid defiance to the Graces, and prefer bitterness and acrimony to sweetness of style and melody of diction.

Though it may not be easy to define the whole of that, whatever it is, which constitutes sweetness of style, yet it is by no means difficult to discover one or two circumstances which are highly conducive to it. It is, indeed, obvious to observe, that the frequent use of liquid letters, and of labials combined with syllables consisting of vowels with few consonants, contributes greatly to sweeten the diction. But so nice a point is real excellence, that the smallest excess or affectation of any particular beauty will totally destroy all its agreeable effect. It must result from nature, cultivated indeed, but not too closely confined and directed by art. Alliteration is conducive to sweetness, and is a figure frequently used by the best writers, ancient and modern. Used with caution, it cannot fail to please; but the cause of the pleasure should be latent. When this figure obtrudes itself too often, and in excess, as it does in several modern writers, it loses all its grace; and the reader resents and loathes the paltry artifice of a writer who depends on so poor a claim to applause. This, indeed, and all other ornaments, are to be used, as it has been observed, like salt at a meal, which agreeably seasons every dish when mixed in moderation, but which would spoil the whole, if it were rendered the predominant ingredient of the repast.

No. CVI.

HINTS TO THOSE WHO ARE DESIGNED FOR THE PROFESSION OF PHYSIC.

It was always a part of my design, in these papers, to suggest a few hints of advice to young persons who are just entering on any of the liberal professions; not, indeed, with a presumptuous intention of directing them in a technical or scientific practice, but merely to give them some general ideas which may render their views more liberal, and their minds more generous, or

arm them with some useful precautions. I remember too well the impertinence of the sophist, who read a lecture to Hannibal on the art of war, to think of instructing any persons in the peculiar art and science which they have made the study of their lives. But there are certain universal truths which men attached to a particular pursuit sometimes overlook. There is also a certain enlargement of mind, which is lost in the narrow habits and confined views of those who take an active part in a profession as a source of lucre. He who surveys life in an extensive prospect, may see a variety of magnificent objects which escape the eye, that is constantly fixed on a single circumstance, and confined within a narrow circle. It is the business of the moralist to inspect every part of human transactions, to endeavour to correct the errors of them, and promote all the excellence and happiness of which each profession is capable.

It has been justly remarked, that they who enter on the profession of medicine in any of its branches, have too often depended for success rather on the cultivation of the graces than the sciences. And it is certain, that many persons whose solid attainments were very moderate have run away with the greatest share of wealth and popularity, with few other recommendations than a fine person, a showy dress, a singular equipage, and an undaunted effrontery.

But since internal satisfaction, a consciousness of having done all that was possible to prepare for a profession very important to mankind, and having pretended to no more than we are able to perform, is a surer source of happiness than the applause, and even the guineas, of the ignorant multitude, I advise every pupil, who values substantial happiness more than the phantom of it, to devote the first period of his life to a very serious pursuit of every part of knowledge which

contributes to give him not only a practical but a theoretical skill in his profession; not only the contracted ideas of a mercenary practitioner, but the comprehensive sentiments of a student of philosophy.

The foundation of medical excellence should be laid in an education truly liberal. It is really lamentable to observe the extreme ignorance of those among medical practitioners who are applied to in the first instance, and who constitute the most numerous class. They are taken from a writing-school, or perhaps a grammar-school, at the age of fourteen, and bound apprentices. They have usually acquired a good handwriting; but their knowledge of the classics and languages is seldom worth mentioning; and upon the whole, their education may be said to be about equal to that of a pauper in a parish charity-school. Their business is to stand behind a counter, and compound medicines according to the prescriptions of the doctor. These are usually in Latin, written very illegibly, and full of affected abbreviations. They are, indeed, often so enigmatical, that nothing less than the sagacity of an Œdipus can resolve their difficulties. The poor lad, if he has time, will toil at his dictionary, where, however, he often toils in vain; but if he has not time, which is usually the case, he takes the most expeditious method of doing business. He is ashamed to confess his ignorance, and therefore puts up any medicine which his conjecture suggests: the phial is wrapt in its paper, adorned with a label *secundum artem*, despatched with all expedition, and the patient poisoned.

After having spent seven years in a shop, pounding drugs and spreading plasters, and after having acquired a little paltry portion of mechanical knowledge by constant habit, the medical student is dismissed as complete; and goes into the country a bold professor of chirurgery and pharmacy. With a smart dress, an un-

blushing countenance, and a voluble tongue, he is sure of success, and bids defiance to all the learning in the world. In his own opinion, he is another Hippocrates or Heberden: and, indeed, he is an object of real wonder to the country people; for he collects a few hard words from his dictionary, which he utters with great gravity among gossips and farmers, who consider him as a very learned man, as well as prodigiously clever in his profession. Those who could bear witness against his skill are all secured and silenced in the church-yard.

I assert, that a competent knowledge of Greek as well as Latin is really necessary to the apothecary, if he would perform his business with that accuracy which is certainly required in so important an employment. Apothecaries are the physicians of more than half the nation. A boy destined to this employment should by no means leave his school till the age of sixteen or seventeen. The knowledge of the learned languages acquired before that time is merely elementary: it is only of use as it leads to farther improvement. It cannot qualify for any profession, much less for the apothecary's; the names of whose instruments, medicines, and operations, are, for the most part, either wholly Greek, or of Greek extraction. Scarcely any of the terms which he is obliged to use, can be understood by him without a knowledge of the Greek language.

But, indeed, if he wishes to raise his profession above the level of an empiric or a farrier, he should acquire a liberal education for its own sake, independently of its use in a mercenary view; for the sake of polishing his mind, and elevating his sentiments. With a liberal education and an extensive practice, he is in fact a physician, though called an apothecary; and though he should neither have purchased a diploma,

nor have earned a regular degree by spending his time and money in an English university, he is a medical Professor, though not an academical Doctor: and the peculiar utility of his employments, when judiciously and humanely conducted, entitles him to the company and conversation of gentlemen and the esteem of every body.

There never was an age in which they who intend to support the dignified character of graduated physicians had better opportunities for improvement in physiology. Lectures, as well as books, in anatomy, chemistry, and every part of science and natural phisophy, never more abounded. Let the future apothecary or physician devote himself to these with long and serious application, and depend more upon them than on the caprice of fashion, or any singularity in his chariot or livery. A popular physician or skilful apothecary in a great capital, and indeed any where, is a very important member of society, considered merely in a political view. The lives, limbs, health, and spirits, of a very great part of the subjects of a kingdom may depend upon his skill and honesty. A man who undertakes this office, and recommends himself by address and artifice, without furnishing his mind with every preparatory knowledge, and who abuses the confidence of those who fly to him, as to a guardian angel, in the deepest distress, has very little claim to the title of an honest man, but deserves to be stigmatized and punished with the worst of villains, and vilest of sharpers. What is a little property compared to health and life?

It has been observed and regretted, that some individuals in this liberal profession have exhibited such an attention to interest as is incompatible with the common feelings of humanity. Such persons are their own enemies; for no gratifications of sordid avarice

can equal the delicious sensations of him who delights in exercising his skill, in diffusing joy through the haunts of misery, and in relieving the sick, the maimed, the halt, and the blind. The profession, when humanely, generously, and skilfully practised, is truly godlike. Every one, it is true, ought to pay that regard to interest which prudence and a love of his own family demand; but he who also delights in relieving, from the satisfaction of sympathy and a sense of duty, may be said to resemble the great model of every perfection, JESUS CHRIST, who went about doing good, and healing all manner of sickness and diseases among the people.

No. XCVII.

THE COMPLAINTS AGAINST MODERN LITERATURE PROBABLY ILL-FOUNDED.

To complain of the present, and to praise the past, has so long been the favourite topic of disappointment or of ignorance, that every stricture on the degeneracy of the times is looked upon as the effusion of ill-nature, or the result of superficial observation: but the absurdity of declamatory invective ought not to preclude the cool remarks of truth, reason, and experience.

The practice of vice or virtue has indeed varied, at different periods, rather in the mode than in the degree; but the state of literature has suffered more violent revolutions: it has sometimes shone with the brightest lustre; and at others has been totally overshadowed with the darkness of barbarism.

To review the state of learning from the earliest periods, and to investigate the causes of its fluctuation, is a task that requires much labour, sagacity, and erudition. More superficial inquiries will, however, suffice to examine the justice of the charge of literary degeneracy in the present age, and, if it be well founded, to discover the causes of it.

It has been observed by an ingenious writer, that as every age has been marked by some peculiarity from which it has derived its characteristic appellation, so the present, were it to be distinguished by a name from its most prevalent humour, might be called the age of authors. Of late years, almost every man has felt an ambition of appearing in print, from the voluminous lexicographer down to the scribbler in a pamphlet or a newspaper. It is, indeed, natural to suppose, that, of a great number of competitors, some would reach the prize; and that the universal combination of intellects would effect some stupendous work, which should exceed all the productions of our predecessors, and demand the admiration of the latest posterity. It has, however, been observed, that the learning of the present age is not deep, though diffusive; and that its productions are not excellent, though numerous.

A multiplicity of compositions is an argument of their hasty production; and hastiness is at least a presumptive proof of their want of merit. In this point, the literary and the natural world resemble each other. The productions of nature, whether vegetable or animal, as they are either of a slow or speedy growth, are known to be durable or transitory, solid or unsubstantial. The oak and the elephant are long before they attain perfection, but are still longer before they decay; while the butterfly and the tulip perish as they arise, almost within the sun's diurnal revolution. The works of Virgil cost him much time and labour; but they have existed near two thousand years universally admired; while the compositions of that poet mentioned by Horace, who boasted he could write two or three hundred verses while he stood on one leg, were lost in a space almost as short as that in which they were produced.

But the hasty formation of literary works in modern

times is not a greater obstacle to their excellence than the mercenary motives of their authors. The office of instructing mankind in morality, and of informing them in science, was once reserved for those alone who were particularly adapted to the task by the impulses of genius, by peculiar opportunities, and by singular application. In these times, however, the profession of an author is become a lucrative employment, and is practised rather by those who feel the inconvenience of hunger than by those who are stimulated with the hope of immortality. But it is a known truth, that the pursuit of money alone contracts the mind, and renders it incapable of elevated sentiments and generous enterprises. It ceases, therefore, to be matter of wonder, that works are destitute of spirit when they proceed not from the noble ardour inspired by the love of fame, but from the frigid incitements of avarice.

The depraved taste of readers is another cause of the degeneracy of writers. They who write for the public must gratify the taste of the public. In vain are their compositions formed on the model of the best writers, and regulated by the precepts of the most judicious critics, if they conform not to the popular caprice and the mistaken judgment of the vulgar. In an age when the taste for reading is universal, many works, contemptible both in design and execution, will be received by some readers with distinguished applause. The want of the merits of just reasoning and pure language is, with the greater part, the half-learned and the ignorant, no objection. The vilest trash of a circulating library, if it abounds with personal abuse, finds its admirers. In truth, unconnected thoughts and superficial declamation are congenial to minds unaccustomed to accurate thinking, and insensible of the charms of finished excellence. Hence writers of acknowledged abilities and learn-

ing have been known, when they aimed at popularity, to relinquish real excellence, and adopt a false taste in opposition to their own judgment; but it is a most disgraceful condescension.

After all, it may not perhaps be absurd to attribute many of the complaints against the present state of letters to ignorance, envy, and caprice. In every department of literature, in the gay regions of fancy, and in the depths of philosophy and science, many authors there are of this age and nation who have acquired an illustrious reputation by deserving it: and if they want that originalty of thought and solidity of learning which mark some of the productions of our first writers, who had the advantage of coming first to the harvest, yet have they a force, elegance, and correctness of style, unknown to most of their predecessors.

No. CVIII.

ON THE CAUSES AND FOLLY OF DISSENSIONS IN A COUNTRY NEIGHBOURHOOD.

It seems extraordinary that, with all our pretensions to the social affections and to Christianity, there are few country towns or villages in which the families, which are reckoned genteel by the right of fortune and of self-estimation, live upon terms of cordial and sincere friendship. One might, I believe, venture to go farther, and to assert, that there are few where a general enmity and dislike do not lurk under the formality of ceremonious visits and civil salutation. The petty passions repel all social endearments of cordial familiarity.

The foundation of all neighbourly animosity is a foolish pride, which, though it was not made for so weak a creature as man, yet adheres so closely to him, that he can seldom divest himself of it, without such

an effort as few minds are able to make. Philosophy is vainly applied; for few are prouder than philosophers, and common minds are not capable of any philosophy. Religion only can effectually eradicate a vice so deeply rooted; that amiable religion which teaches us to love our neigbours as ourselves; and which has informed us of a truth, which experience abundantly confirms, that from pride cometh contention.

The most trifling distinction or appearance of superiority in a neighbourhood, is sure to excite all the heart-burnings of secret envy and jealousy. Instead of rejoicing at any fortunate event which contributes to the happiness of a neighbour, the greater part secretly repine at it, and endeavour to lessen the satisfaction it might afford, by disseminating some mortifying surmise or insinuation. Indeed, the fortunate person sometimes deserves some humiliation; for as his neighbours are endeavouring to lower him to their own level, he, on the other hand, ostentatiously displays his superiority, and labours to depress them below their due rank, that his own elevation may be more conspicuous. It would be entertaining to behold the little contrivances which the petty gentry invent for the purpose of eclipsing each other, if there were not always something of a malignity which disgusts and hurts the mind of a humane man. The rivalry of rural neighbourhood is by no means of an amicable sort; and though the parties are wonderfully civil when they meet, they often hate each other with the greatest inveteracy. Nothing would, indeed, give them greater pleasure than to hear of each other's losses or ruin, though they would not fail to visit on the occasion, and to sympathize in the politest and most improved fashion. Envy overcomes all the duties of social life and Christian benevolence.

Scandal, indeed, who has long reigned with arbitrary sway in country towns, is usually the cause of all that latent hatred which poisons the happiness of families whose birth or fortune has placed them in the same neighbourhood; and who, enjoying plenty, might also enjoy peace, if they could prevail upon themselves to turn a deaf ear to the tale-bearer. But such is the perverseness or malignity of many, that though they have themselves but just suffered from the false reports of slanders, they listen with delight to the next whisper, that flies, like the arrow in the dark, and wounds a neighbour's reputation. If any favourable report begin to prevail, it is with difficulty admitted; it is doubted, contradicted, or extenuated. But there is no malignant and mischievous lie so improbably false, so little like the truth, but it will be joyfully received and believed without examination, so long as it tends to lower an object of envy in the esteem of a neighbourhood, to injure the interest of a rival, or to wound the heart of him whom we hate, only because we feel the weight of his superiority.

It is to be wished, that people would consider from how contemptible a source most of those calumnies originate which induce neighbours to entertain a bad opinion of each other, and, in consequence, to live in a state of constant though secret enmity. They usually come from domestic servants, who, in revenge for a just reprimand, or from the wickedness of an ungrateful heart, delight in disseminating the most cruel tales without the least foundation in truth or reality. Or, supposing something similar to the calumny did happen in a neighbour's house, it is so disguised, altered, and exaggerated, by the time it has gone from the top of a town to the bottom, that what was in truth no more than a trifle scarcely worth attention, becomes a charge of a most atrocious and injurious

kind, when it has been tossed from tongue to tongue, and magnified by the passions and the imagination. The vilest menial shall utter a lie in the meanest shop of the most paltry town; and, in the space of half an hour, it shall be republished with additions and embellishments, as a known fact, by the Lady of the Manor.

The petty offices and distinctions of churchwardens, surveyors, mayors, commissioners of turnpike-roads, and similar rural dignities, do indeed often fill their possessors, and their ladies, with so high a sense of their own importance, and at the same time excite so much envy in the little minds which aspire to such honours, that, in proportion as the great personage advances in the path of glory, he is often obliged to relinquish the comforts of good neighbourhood. It is not, indeed, to be wondered at, if those who have had little or no education, and whose views have been confined to horses, dogs, and the affairs of a vestry and a court-leet, should value themselves too much on petty distinction, and should suppose the title of esquire, the offices of justice of peace or churchwarden, such honours as may justify them in treating others with contumely. Neither is it wonderful, that they who have never wandered beyond the limits of their native parish should survey such distinctions with an envious eye. All men ought, indeed, to aspire at distinction, as it may lead them to aspire to usefulness and virtue; but it is certainly desirable, for the sake of tranquillity, that envy and malice should not be mixed with the laudable emulation of rural aspirants to office and authority.

But there are other causes besides the love of scandal and the gratification of vanity which powerfully operate in interrupting the harmony of a good neighbourhood. Avarice is the occasion of many and

indeterminable disagreements. In what part of the country can we fix our residence where some of the clergy are not objects of dislike, because a regard to their wives and children, whose bread depends upon their lives, induces them to insist on those dues which the laws have allowed them? The clergyman in the most desert part of the country is usually a man of learning (more learning at least than his parishioners), and of a polite mind, who might diffuse a taste for elegant and improving conversation; but he is often excluded from the society of his esquires because he makes a just claim upon their property. The most shocking calumnies are propagated against him and his family, because he takes his tithes in kind; every thing is done which can mortify and distress him; and he is frequently involved for life by the farmers, and a pettifogger at their head, in vexatious and expensive litigation. He who preaches peace, and who might soften, by the influence of polished manners, the remains of brutality among his savage and narrow-minded neighbours, is hunted by them till he is forced to take refuge in the lonely retreat of his library.

The various meetings which are necessary to conduct parish and other public business in the country are often productive of violent animosities. An opposition formed at a vestry, or a turnpike-meeting, is sometimes carried on with more acrimony than in the House of Commons. It would not be so lamentable, if the consequences of the dispute terminated at the time and place in which it arose; but it usually happens that, if the gentlemen have disagreed in the vestry, the ladies, at the next tea-drinking, put on sullen looks, and commence a secret attack on each other's persons, dress, character, and conduct. Hostilities which owe their rise to a difference of opinion concerning the mending of a road, the appropriation of a pew, or the

repairing of a steeple, are carried on under the cover of external civility, and continue from generation to generation.

It would be a very valuable point gained, if we could prevail on the many thousands, who, with all the external means of happiness, lead uncomfortable lives in the country from the dissensions of their neighbourhood, to consider duly the importance of a friendly intercouse with those in whose vicinity they have been placed by Providence. They may be confidently assured, that no pleasure arising from scandal, from petty distinctions, from trifling matters of interest, or from influence over parish or county meetings, can be compared to the satisfaction of living in love, and in a constant interchange of those good offices which alleviate adversity, and give to prosperity its sweetest enjoyments. The qualities indispensably necessary to promote and preserve peace and good-will in a neighbourhood, are Christian benevolence and Christian humility. Religion must interpose to cure the evils of worldly pride and passions.

No. CIX.

THE IMPRUDENCE OF AN EARLY ATTACHMENT TO ACTING PLAYS. [IN A LETTER.]

As I was sauntering a few days ago on one of the public walks, I could not help particularly remarking a young man, whose dress showed marks of a shabby gentility, and whose countenance wore the aspect of a settled melancholy.

The appearance of wretchedness, in whatever situation, is always sufficient to awaken my curiosity. I felt myself irresistibly impelled to inquire into the history of a person who seemed to be completely miserable. After having walked a considerable time, I saw him throw himself, in a disconsolate attitude

on one of the seats of the walk. I did not neglect the opportunity; but, seating myself by his side, prevailed on him, after some introductory conversation, to give me his history, which he did in the following words*:

"Yes, Sir," said he, "though my present appearance may seem to invalidate my assertion, I assure you I was the son of one of the most opulent traders in the metropolis. I might, at this time, have been enjoying all the happiness that affluence can bestow; but now, alas! I have no where to lay my head, no refuge to which I can fly for comfort. I am abandoned to the wide world without a friend; and one consideration aggravates all my misery—I have deserved my sufferings, and cannot justly complain."

Here he paused to conceal a tear which was just bursting from his eyes. After he had a little recovered himself, his countenance gradually grew more serene, and he proceeded with less emotion.

"When I was at the age of eleven, my father placed me at a celebrated grammar-school: there I spent the happiest days of my life. Nature, as I was told, had given me parts. I made a rapid progress in classical learning: all was encouragement, all was hope, and all was happiness. But, in the midst of my improvement, my father resolved, in opposition to the advice of my master, to remove me from school, and to settle me in his own counting-house. My master urged, that though I might perhaps succeed in a learned profession, yet the vivacity of my disposition would be an abstacle to my prosperity in a mercantile employment. My father, sensible of the lucrative advantages of an established trade, was deaf to these remonstrances; and on a fatal day I entered into engagements to plod at the desk and the counter for seven years.

* This account is founded on fact.

" But nature is not to be constrained by indentures. Instead of casting up sums, and measuring ells, I employed my time in the perusal of Shakespeare, in composing epilogues and farces, and in discussing the merits of every new dramatic production. Instead of spending my evenings in posting accounts, and examining my ledger, I was always attending the performances of a Foote or a Garrick. At length, by constantly frequenting the playhouses, and mixing with contemptible sciolists, who called themselves theatrical critics, I became so enamoured of the stage, as to look upon dramatic entertainments as constituting the most important business, as well as the most agreeable enjoyments, of human life. The shop continually resounded with my rants in imitation of some favourite actor; and I went so far as to treat the purchasers of a yard of Irish linen with a theatrical tone and a dramatic action.

" I had so great an opinion of my own talents, that, like the immortal Shakespeare, I was ambitious of shining both as an actor and a writer. Accordingly I finished a comedy with great care and pains, and presented it to one of the managers, who returned it upon my hands with evident marks of contempt. By no means dejected, I was resolved to try my success as an actor. But having, with great difficulty, obtained permission to speak before the managers and a circle of their friends, who seemed to enjoy my distress, I was again rejected.

" Though I could not succeed at the theatres, I was resolved to exert my abilities at spouting and disputing clubs. And here, indeed, I easily made a conspicuous figure, as I had the advantage of a classical education, and most of my competitors had no education at all. The most important topics of religion, learning, and politics, I discussed with more volubility than the

gravest prelate, the profoundest academic, or the craftiest statesman. But I triumphed, as it were, without an enemy, and the facility of the conquest diminished the pleasure of it. I soon became weary of dry argumentation, and eagerly panted to wear the buskin, and to mouth the sonorous periods of some tragic bard.

"It happened that I had formed a connexion with a young member of the club, whose genius was entirely similar to my own, and who had been engaged with a strolling company of players. He had often solicited me to go with him on an acting tour into the north of England, and I had as often refused, from a principle of pride. But, at length, an ardent desire of exhibiting on a stage overcame every regard to duty, and every compunction of conscience. In a fatal hour (I blush to mention it), I embezzled a sum of my father's money, with which I was trusted in the course of business, packed up my clothes, and accompanied a set of vagabonds who, like myself, had abandoned every reputable occupation, and devoted themselves to infamy and indigence, for the sake of enjoying the plaudits of a few rustics assembled in a barn.

"And now commences the æra of all my misery. The money I had fraudulently taken was soon squandered away in a society of thoughtless mortals, who regarded not to-morrow, if they could feast to-day. We were, indeed, received with applause; but the audience was commonly so scanty, that the expenses of representation often exceeded the receipts. In every town we were looked upon with suspicion, and treated as vagrants. We were sometimes reduced to such extremities, by the expenses of travelling, and the losses of acting to empty barns, that we have wanted even food to support nature. Above charity, we could not be relieved; and destitute of credit, we could not be trusted. At length

I saw my folly; and, after various resolves, sent to a friend to inquire whether my father was disposed to receive me, should I return and confess my fault. How, alas! was I struck, when I was told in answer, that my father died a few days ago of a broken heart; and that his death was so sudden, that he had not time to alter his will, in which, in the first rage after his discovery of my elopement, he had cut me off with a shilling.

"It is impossible to give you an adequate idea of my grief on this occasion; and I shall only inform you, that it would have proved fatal, had it not been soon removed by emotions of a different kind. During my indisposition, one of the actresses of our company, whose beauty is only exceeded by the goodness of her heart, watched me with all the anxiety of a parent, and soothed me under the horrors of despair, with the softest blandishments of tenderness. I soon felt a flame kindling in my breast which was answered with a sympathethic passion. In short, I was no sooner restored to health and vigour, than I married the lovely Emily. We have now been united near a year, and yesterday she was safely delivered of twins. That she is well, thank Heaven; but, alas! the reflection, that I am destitute of all the means that can give her ease, or provide for her offspring, sharpens all the darts of ill fortune, and imbitters every woe."

Here he stopped, and I was obliged to leave him, after having given him an invitation to my house, where I hope to be able to alleviate his misfortunes, without hurting his sensibility. But I cannot help expressing my wish, that all who, deluded by a heated imagination, feel themselves inclined to quit the comforts of a parent and a home in pursuit of a profession which is prohibited by law, and which often entails on its followers misery and disgrace, may avoid his wretchedness by avoiding his misconduct.

No. CX.

ON THE PLEASURES OF REFLECTION. [IN A LETTER.]

THAT the enjoyments of the understanding exceed the pleasures of sense, is a truth confessed by all who are capable of exerting the faculties of thinking in their full vigour. But by these pleasures are generally understood sublime contemplations on subjects of science and abstruse disquisition; contemplation which can only be the result of uncommon powers and extraordinary efforts.

But there are intellectual pleasures of another kind, to the enjoyment of which neither great abilities nor learning are required. These are no other than the pleasures of reflection, which are open to the illiterate mechanic as well as to the sage philosopher, and afford to a good mind some of the sweetest satisfactions of human life.

There are few who have not felt pleasing sensations arising from a retrospective view of the first period of their lives. To recollect the puerile amusements, the petty anxities, and the eager pursuits of childhood, is a task in which all delight. It is common to observe, that on no subject do men dwell with such pleasure as the boyish tricks and wanton pranks which they practised at school. The hoary head looks back with a smile of complacency, mixed with regret, on the season when health glowed on the cheek, when lively spirits warmed the heart, and when toil strung the nerves with vigour.

Cicero has remarked, that events the most disagreeable during their immediate influence, give an exquisite satisfaction when their consequences have ceased; and Æneas solaces his companions under the hardships they endured with the consideration, that the remembrance of their sufferings would one day give them satisfaction. That these sentiments are just, is well known to those who have enjoyed the conversation of the soldier.

Battles, skirmishes, and sieges, at which, perhaps, he trembled during the action, furnish him with topics of conversation and sources of pleasure for the remainder of his life.

Reflection is the properest employment, and the sweetest satisfaction, in a rational old age. Destitute of strength and vigour necessary for bodily exertions, and furnished with observations by experience, the old man finds his greatest pleasure to consist in wandering in imagination over past scenes of delight, in recounting the adventures of his youth, the vicissitudes of human life, and the public events to which he is proud of having been an eye-witness. Of so exalted a nature are these enjoyments, that theologists have not hesitated to assert, that to recollect a well-spent life is to anticipate the bliss of a future existence.

The professors of philosophy, who will be acknowledged to have understood the nature of true and substantial pleasure better than the busy, the gay, and the dissipated, have ever shown a predilection for privacy and solitude. No other cause have they assigned for their conduct in forsaking society, than that the noise and hurry of the world are incompatible with the exertion of calm reason and dispassionate reflection. The apophthegm of that ancient who said, "he was never less alone than when by himself," is not to be considered merely as an epigrammatic turn. In vain was it to pursue philosophy in the Suburra; she was to be courted with success only in the sequestered shade of rural retirement.

Were the powers of reflection cultivated by habit, mankind would at all times be able to derive a pleasure from their own breasts as rational as it is exalted. To the attainment of this happiness, a strict adherence to the rules of virtue is necessary; for let it be remembered, that none can feel the pleasures of reflection who do not enjoy the peace of innocence.

No. CXI.

ON SOME INCONVENIENCES WHICH UNAVOIDABLY ATTEND LIVING WRITERS.

THE composition of a book has often been compared to the furnishing of a feast, in which, whatever art may have been exerted, and variety produced, it seldom happens that every palate is equally pleased. Sometimes the dishes are not dressed and seasoned as they ought to be; and sometimes the organs of sensation in the guests are languid and indisposed. No work, however excellent, ever yet appeared, which was not blamed, as well as praised, by many; but we hesitate not to pronounce that good which retains, during a considerable time, a majority of suffrages in its favour. Longinus, very reasonably, makes the favourable opinion of various nations, for many ages, an infallible criterion of an author's singular excellence. And it is certain, that to call in question the merits of those books which have long survived their authors, contributes more to disgrace the critic, than to diminish the reputation of the author.

But living writers labour under peculiar disadvantages, not only from the difficulty of arriving at distinction after so many illustrious predecessors, but from the prejudices and the envy of their equals and contemporaries. Men have always felt an inclination to exalt departed genius, not only from a sincere admiration of it, but also with a secret desire to degrade living merit, by introducing an invidious comparison. No one aspires at the distinction of fortune, or civil honours, without exciting jealousy. It would be therefore unreasonable to suppose, that literary ambition should be exempted from the attendants of all ambition. It aims at peculiar distinction, and must therefore excite peculiar opposition.

There never yet was a moral writer, however sin-

cere, whose life and external manners corresponded, in every respect, with the dignity of his writings, and who did not, in some degree, disappoint those who were led by the admiration of his works to approach his person, and to seek his company and conversation in the ordinary scenes of familiar life. Too high an expectation is usually formed of him; and we do not consider, that in his book we survey only the picture of his mind; a picture, which is usually sullied and deformed by the crazy frame in which it is confined. When he sat down to write, his soul was probably in its proper state; all spiritual, and all contemplative. No sooner has he laid aside his pen, and departed from his library, than he is necessarily engaged in the common pursuits of mankind, and displays, like them, many frailties, and many of those faults which he has very sincerely, and from the fullest conviction, condemned in his moral dissertations. But when a spectator, unacquainted with life, manners, and the inconstancy of the human heart, beholds this difference between the writer's book and his behaviour, he too precipitately and severely indulges his censure, and learns to despise him whom at a distance he admired. Thus are enemies and calumniators multiplied, without any other failings on the part of the injured person than the common imbecilities attendant on the most improved state of human nature. Foibles and errors, which would scarcely be noticed in others, are not only remarked in him, but remembered and related in company as matter of entertainment. Even his sincerity is doubted, and the writer is lowered by the imperfections of the man, though his imperfections are only the common characteristics of humanity. If he has written against avarice or ambition, and happens, by honest industry or good fortune, to gain money or promotion, he is immediately represented as a hypocrite, notwith-

standing he may have a family dependent upon him for support, or may have worn himself out in the service of the public, without seeking or gaining any other emolument than what may afford him an humble and quiet retreat in his old age.

It is not easy to write without sometimes appearing to assume an air of superiority. Moral precepts would often be ineffectual, if they were not enforced in a style which, though by no means dogmatical, is yet in a due degree authoritative. The neighbours and the familiar acquaintance of the moralist, who are accustomed to estimate importance by property, and to judge of the weight of a man's opinions by the weight of his purse, are offended to find him who has not a vote in a county election, nor an acre of arable or pasture on the face of the earth, daring to express himself with as much freedom as if he were animated with the consciousness of keeping a pack of fox-hounds, or had considerable influence in returning a knight of the shire. Nevertheless, if what he writes be true, truth being great, he who is armed with it will certainly prevail. Resistance or contradiction will be ineffectual. Nothing, therefore, remains but ridicule and detraction to sap the fortress which is proof against assault. The writer, therefore, is represented by the neighbouring gentlemen as an oddity, a melancholy recluse, and perhaps a little cracked; both he and his family are pitied by the humane ladies for being perpetually confined to musty books, and total strangers to all true pleasure. Between the sippings of the tea and the dealing of the cards much criticism is displayed, in which it is not easy to determine which is the more conspicuous—ignorance or ill-nature. It is not uncommon for persons who can hardly write their names, or indite a love-letter without Entick's Spelling Dictionary, to decide on the merit of a cele-

brated poem, or any other new publication, with all the authority of an Aristotle, or the foolish virulence of a Zoilus. And who, indeed, can controvert a remark, however injudicious or malignant, when it proceeds from lips which add a grace and sweetness to all they utter? And even the veteran virgin may be allowed to console herself in the intervals of scandal with the severity of literary criticism. It must, indeed, be owned, that many lies and false censures on characters are published to the world at the tea and the card-table; but there is this comfort, that, whenever it is known whence they originate, they are suffered, by all candid and sensible persons, to drop, still-born, from their prolific parents. Yet, sometimes, they struggle into life, and are able to murder many a reputation before their own final extinction.

Every thing excellent is to be paid for at a certain price of inconvenience or difficulty. The calumnies of envy, ignorance, and impertinence, must be sustained by him who endeavours, by worthy means, to procure the esteem of the worthy. He must weigh the praises against the censures, and enjoy the predominant applause, while he neglects the severe remarks of impertinence or ill temper, as trifles light as air. No truth has been more repeatedly uttered, than that nothing in this sublunary state is, in every respect, what we wish it. We must, then, learn to submit to necessity, and turn our attention from our evils to our advantages. After all our complaints, Providence is usually found kind and impartial; and, if we possess but humility and patience, we shall discover, under our most disagreeable situation, some copious source of placid enjoyment. The ill usage of the world will recoil from the heart which is shielded with faith and innocence, as the billows are reverberated from the rock.

Whatever difficulties or injuries a writer may sus-

tain, he may console himself, if he has always taken the part of truth and virtue, that he has employed the talents which God gave him in a manner at least inoffensive; and that it is probable many, in the great mass of mankind, may possess a kindred spirit, and at some favourable moment may receive pleasure and advantage from his lucubrations, even when he is united with the dust from which he was taken, and become equally insensible to censure or applause.

No. CXII.

ON THE OBLIGATIONS WHICH LEARNING OWES TO THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

MANY among those who have made the greatest pretensions to learning have professed themselves enemies to Revelation. It is not, indeed, difficult to account for their rejection of a religion which is all humility, and by no means calculated to please such as consider the applause of men as the most valuable object, and who pride themselves on the infallibility of their own intellects. To the bold, the conceited, and the half-learned pretender to philosophy, who is weak enough to think his reason commensurate to every object which falls under its notice, that system which requires the exercise of faith more than of reason, appears, as the Scriptures themselves observe, foolishness. Pride and a very silly kind of pride, such indeed as arises from narrow views of things and an ignorance of oneself and of human nature, is commonly the foundation of infidelity.

It is, however, no less ungrateful than foolish and wicked, in the sons of learning, to devote their abilities to the extermination of the national religion. For it is really true, that all the ancient learning which now remains was preserved by some peculiar circumstances attending the propagation of Christianity; and, I

believe, it will be thought very probable, that if the ancient languages, and the books written in them, had been entirely lost, the civilised nations of Europe would have still continued in a state of darkness and barbarism. Real superstition would then, indeed, have reigned triumphant; and the philosopher, as he calls himself, who is now writing down Christianity, would have been trembling at witches and goblins, spells and enchantments. He makes use of that very light which has directed his steps in the paths of learning, to discover the most probable means of extinguishing the source of all illumination.

I was led into this train of reflections by the perusal of a charge of a late archdeacon of London, Dr. Jortin, in which he evinces that our Saviour spoke most truly in more senses than one, when he said of himself, "I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD."

When any species of literary industry is considered as a duty founded on religion, care will be taken to preserve it. It might otherwise, from the indolence and infirmity of the human mind, have been lost amidst revolutions, persecutions, distress, and the fury of conquest. In every difficulty, the Christians fled for comfort to their Scriptures, and watched over them with peculiar vigilance. The Septuagint preserved, in the worst times, a knowledge of Greek; and the Latin translations, which were multiplied with avidity, rescued the Latin language from a total oblivion. Josephus was studied, and therefore preserved by the Christians more carefully than by the Jews; and the necessity of Greek for the understanding of the New Testament caused that language not only to be saved from the ravages of time, but also to be studied with devout attention.

The fathers of the church wrote in Greek during three centuries; and at a time when the Latin lan-

guage was gradually decaying, the Latin fathers contributed something to its restoration, and wrote as well as their coeval writers among the Pagans, not indeed with Augustan elegance, but still well enough to preserve a skill in the construction and vocabulary of the language.

A considerable knowledge of history, and something of chronology and philosophy, was necessary in studying and defending the Scriptures, even in the earliest ages; and many Christians appeared well skilled in these parts of learning, at a time when they were generally neglected. Religion and conscience operated as a stimulus, when all other motives were insufficient to retard the mind in its swift progress down the declivity of ignorance and degeneracy.

With a view, and solely with a view, to enable ecclesiastics to read and understand the Scriptures, even in the most dismal night of ignorance, there were some places of instruction, in cathedrals and monasteries, in which the embers of literature, if we may venture to use that expression, were preserved from total extinction; in which a spark lay latent, which was one day to relume a light destined to lighten the universe.

The little learning of those unfortunate ages, though it did not enable the persons who possessed it to taste and understand the beauties of the ancient poets and philosophers, yet gave them some idea of the value of books in general, and enabled them to transcribe, with tolerable accuracy, even what they did not entirely or accurately understand. Thus were those inestimable treasures of all elegant and pleasing knowledge, the old Greek and Latin authors, handed down to happier ages; to those who were able to unlock them, and pour out their riches for the general utility. Nor are we indebted to Christians for the classics only; but

also for the Roman law, and the codes of Justinian and Theodosius. Books, which were destroyed by ignorant and angry kings and conquerors, found a safe asylum in religious houses; and even Monkery, which has been justly reprobated as one of the follies of human nature, became, under the direction of Providence, the instrument of many of those blessings which now contribute greatly to the happiness and dignity of an enlightened empire.

The revival of learning, as it is termed, or its emancipation from churches and monasteries, and general diffusion over the world, is greatly owing to the efforts of ecclesiastics. There arose, in the auspicious morning of learning restored, a constellation of polite and profound Christian scholars, whose effulgence has scarcely been outshone by any succeeding luminaries in the literary horizon.

The best scholars of modern times, not only in theology, but in every part of human learning, have been Christian divines. They were led by their pursuit of religious knowledge into the collateral paths of philosophy, philology, and all elegant and useful literature.

It is to the piety of Christians that we owe the venerable foundations of schools and colleges, those institutions, which, though they have often been perverted, have still kept the light burning like the vestal fire, and handed the torch from one generation to another like the runners in the torch race. It was the love of Christ which taught those towers to rise on the banks of the Cam and the Isis, and planted seminaries of learning, the good old Grammar-schools, in every considerable town throughout the kingdom. But the lamp may sometimes require attention to preserve it from burning dimly, though originally illuminated by religion.

"To the Gospel," says the learned divine who suggested this subject, "and to those who embraced it, are due our grateful acknowledgments for the learning that is at present in the world. The infidels educated in Christian countries owe what learning they have to Christianity, and act the part of those brutes, which, when they have sucked the dam, turn about and strike her."

No. CXIII.

CURSORY REMARKS ON THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF DR. JORTIN.

THE mind feels a secret complacency in contemplating characters eminent for virtue, learning, and religion; and there are few who are not delighted, as well as instructed, by the praises bestowed on departed merit. Notwithstanding the depravity of human nature, virtue still appears amiable to the vicious, and knowledge to the ignorant. Experience, indeed, seems to confirm the opinion of Plato, that goodness, exclusive of its collateral advantages, is possessed of charms irresistibly captivating.

A review of the life of the late Dr. Jortin, whom I knew when a school-boy, cannot but suggest the most pleasing reflections. As a poet, a divine, a philosopher, and a man, he served the cause of religion, learning, and morality. There are, indeed, many writers whose reputation is more diffused among the vulgar and illiterate; but few will be found whose name stands higher than Dr. Jortin's in the esteem of the judicious. His Latin poetry (the *Lusus Poetici*) is classically elegant. His discourses and dissertations sensible, learned, and argumentative. His remarks on ecclesiastical history interesting and impartial. His sermons replete with sound sense and rational morality, expressed in a style simple, pure, and perspicuous.

Simplicity of style is a grace, which, though it may

not captivate at first sight, is sure in the end to give permanent satisfaction. It does not excite admiration, but it raises esteem. It does not warm to rapture, but it soothes to complacency. Unskilful writers seldom aim at this excellence. They imagine that which is natural and common cannot be beautiful. Every thing in their compositions must be strained, every thing affected: but Dr. Jortin had studied the ancients, and perhaps formed himself on the model of Xenophon. He wrote on subjects of morality; and morality is founded on reason, and reason is always cool and dispassionate. A florid declamation, embellished with rhetorical figures, and animated with pathetic description, may indeed amuse the fancy, and raise a transient emotion in the heart; but rational discourse alone can convince the understanding, and reform the conduct.

The first efforts of genius have commonly been in poetry. Unrestrained by the frigidity of argument and the confinement of rules, the young mind gladly indulges the flights of imagination. Cicero, as well as many other ancient philosophers, orators, and historians, is known to have sacrificed to the Muses in his earlier productions. Dr. Jortin adds to the number of those who confirm the observation. In his *Lusus Poetici*, one of the first of his works, are united classical language, tender sentiment, and harmonious verse. Among the modern Latin poets, there are few who do not yield to Dr. Jortin. His Sapphics, on the story of Bacchus and Ariadne, are easy, elegant, and poetical. The little ode in which the calm life of the philosopher is compared to the gentle stream gliding through a silent grove, is highly pleasing to the mind, and perfectly elegant in the composition*. The lyrics are

* Qualis per nemorum nigra silentia,
Vallesque irriguas, et virides domos,
Serpit fons placidus murmure languido,
Secretum peragens iter:

indeed all excellent. The poem on the immortality of the soul is an exact imitation of the style of Lucretius. The whole collection is such as would scarcely have disgraced a Roman in the age of an Augustus.

Time, if it cool not the fire of imagination, certainly strengthens the powers of judgment. As Dr. Jortin advanced in life, he cultivated his reason rather than his fancy, and desisted from his efforts in poetry, to exert his abilities in the disquisitions of criticism and theological erudition. His observations on one of the fathers of English poetry need but to be more generally known, in order to be more generally approved and admired.

Classical productions are rather amusing than instructive. His works of this kind are all juvenile, and naturally flowed from a genius like his, improved by a classical education. These, however, were but preparatory to his higher designs, and soon gave way to the more important inquiries which were peculiar to his profession. His discourses on the Christian religion, one of the first fruits of his theological pursuits, abound with sound sense and solid argument.

His dissertations are equally remarkable for taste, learning, originality, and ingenuity.

His remarks on ecclesiastical history are full of manly sense, ingenious strictures, and profound erudi-

Flexas per patrios circumagens aquas
Paulum ludit agros, et sinuat fugam,
Donec præcipiti jam pede defluus
Miscetur gremio maris.

Talis per tacitam devia semitam
Ætas diffugiat, non opibus gravis,
Non experta fori jurgia turbidi, aut
Palmæ sanguineum decus:

Cumque instant tenebræ ex lux brevis occidit,
Et ludo satura et fessa laboribus
Somni frater iners membra jacentia
Componat gelidâ manu.

tion. The work is highly beneficial to mankind, as it represents, in its proper light, that superstition which disgraced human nature, and gives a right sense of the advantages derived from religious reformation. He every where expresses himself with peculiar vehemence against the infatuation of bigotry and fanaticism. Convinced that true happiness is founded on a right use of the reasoning powers, he makes it the scope of all his religious works to lead mankind from the errors of imagination, and to enforce obedience to the dictates of dispassionate reason.

Posthumous publications, it has been remarked, are usually inferior in merit to those which are published during an author's life. And, indeed, the opinion seems plausible; as it may be presumed, that an author's reason for not publishing his works is a consciousness of their inferiority. The sermons of Dr. Jortin are, however, an exception. Good sense and sound morality appear in them; not, indeed, dressed out in the meretricious ornaments of a florid style, but in all the manly force and simple graces of natural eloquence. The same caprice which raises to reputation those trifling discourses which have nothing to recommend them but a prettiness of fancy and flowery language, will again consign them to oblivion; but the sermons of Dr. Jortin will always be read with pleasure and edification.

The transition from an author's writings to his life is frequently disadvantageous to his character. Dr. Jortin, however, when no longer considered as an author, but as a man, is far from being lessened in our opinion. A simplicity of manners, an inoffensive behaviour, an universal benevolence, candour, modesty, and good sense, were his characteristics. Though his genius and love of letters led him to choose the still vale of sequestered life, yet was his merit conspicuous

enough to attract the notice of a primate who did honour to episcopacy. Unknown by personal acquaintance, and unrecommended by the solicitation of friends or the interposition of power, he was presented by archbishop Herring to a valuable benefice in London, as a reward for his exertions as a scholar and a divine. Some time after, he became chaplain to a late bishop of London, who gave him the vicarage of Kensington, and appointed him archdeacon of his diocese. This was all the preferment he obtained, nor had he this till he was advanced in life. He did not, however, repine. Thus he speaks of himself:—"Not to his erudition—but to his constant love and pursuit of it—he owes a situation and a station better than he expected, and as good as he ought to desire."

Since the above remarks were written, I have been informed that several of the sermons of Dr. Jortin are translations from the French. He certainly was a great reader of French divinity; and he confessedly borrowed from it freely. It has been suggested to me, that he was not so remarkable for genius and invention as industry and learning. His poetry, I think, proves that he possessed great genius. Perhaps he overwhelmed it by a multifarious reading of authors who had not much genius, and were therefore not like to excite it.

I must confess that it is possible I may have adopted the style of panegyric, from having known a little of this learned man personally, and beheld him, when I was a boy, with reverence. But my opinion of him is confirmed by the best judges, and by public fame.

No. CXIV.

ON THE UNION OF EXTRAVAGANCE IN TRIFLES AND VICE, WITH PARSIMONY IN ALL THE TRULY HONOURABLE, USEFUL, AND NECESSARY EXPENCES.

No appearance in the moral world is more remarkable than that combination which is often observed in the same character, of avarice with profusion, of meanness with liberality. Vanity, selfishness, and a want of serious principles, are striking circumstances in the manners of the present age; and as vanity leads to expensive ostentation, so selfishness and want of principle have a natural tendency to produce covetousness and rapacity. Very few restraints are allowed to operate on the modes of acquiring or of saving money, except the fear of detection, shame, and loss. There is scarcely any meanness or baseness to which many persons who make the greatest show in dress, furniture, and equipage, are not ready to submit, under the certainty of concealment. But the meanness of avarice is most visible in public life, in the venality and servility of giving suffrages at elections and in the senate.

The time has been, when a great family residing in a great house of a village was considered as a blessing to all the neighbouring country. The poor were employed in adorning and improving the grounds all about it. The table in the parlour was always open for the reception of the gentlemen who resided within ten miles of the house; and the kitchen afforded warmth and plenty to the poor and industrious tenant or labourer. The rich man resided in the house of his fathers, and spent his money among those who earned it for him by the sweat of their brows. But, according to the modern system of fashionable manners, such a kind of life would be deemed intolerably dull, as well as antiquated and vulgar. The family, therefore, spend as little time as possible at the noble seat of their

ancestors, but hasten to the sea-side, or the watering-places, where they hire a little hut or cabin, and lavish their money on strangers, with few returns of gratitude, or of rational satisfaction. The farmer, who lives in their native village, returning weary from his plough, shakes his head as he passes the cold kitchen, and turns with pity and contempt from the smokeless roof. The servants are pinched, and even envy the comparative plenty and independence of the next cottagers. The whole country rings with reports of the meanness and poor living at the great house. In the mean time, the lord and lady, the baronet or 'squire, with their respective families, are figuring, as it is called, in all the profusion of emulous extravagance, yet often with the most parsimonious meanness, at Bath or Brighthelmstone. While they grudge the bread and cheese which is consumed in their own houses, or refuse to contribute to a brief, or any charitable institution among their poor neighbours at home, they subscribe most liberally to every fashionable folly and amusement. They give feasts to strangers whom they shall never see any more, and whose principal recommendation is, that they appear, from their external splendour, not to want assistance. Their vanity is gratified in seeing the great and the rich at their table, especially when useful connexions may be made; and what signifies it, they think, if the wretches at home, the tenantry, whom nobody knows, starve and rot on the dunghills whence they originated.

It is easy to observe persons of this description, who will not hesitate to expend many hundreds in dress alone, but who, when a book is praised in their presence, will spare no trouble in finding somebody of whom they may borrow it; alleging, in excuse, that books are so dear, it is impossible to buy every thing that comes out. The price of the book shall be a few

shillings, and it shall contain amusement for many days; and yet they will not buy it, because it would be extravagant; though they will not scruple to expend three guineas, any night in the week, for three hours' pastime in a party at the public places of diversion. The milliners', the mantua-makers', the tailors' bills, shall amount to hundreds a year; but five pounds expended at the bookseller's would be downright prodigality. Guineas flow, without restraint, in subscriptions to balls, concerts, assemblies; to dancing-masters, music-masters, and to players; but when the parish lecturer's book is brought, or the Marine Society, or the Magdalen, or the Infirmary, or the Prisoners for Small Debts, are recommended as fit objects to receive their superfluities, they immediately look grave, complain that taxes rise and rents fall; and assert, with an unfeeling heart, that these are not times to admit of any expenses which are not absolutely necessary. Besides, they must save for the approaching general election.

The education of their children ought certainly to constitute one of the first cares of the rich, and no reasonable expense should be withheld in the accomplishment of it. But there are many great families in which this is one of the smallest articles of annual expenditure. The butler is better paid than the tutor.

Indeed, in all necessary and laudable expenses a degree of frugality is displayed which approaches to extreme meanness and parsimony. The poor tradesmen who supply the ordinary articles of domestic consumption are not only denied their price, but after every abatement, are obliged to wait an unreasonable time for their money. So far are such persons from possessing an inclination to be generous, that it grieves them to be just. But though they who furnish commodities without which life cannot be supported, are

ill-used and defrauded, whoever can supply any circumstances of dress, equipage, and luxury, by which selfishness and personal vanity may be gratified, are profusely and immediately rewarded. Men of letters, or ingenuity in the professions, are kept at a distance; but the door is always open to players, and to signiors, and signioras. Chaplains and tutors are out of fashion, or rewarded at the public expense; but their place is abundantly supplied by fiddlers, pipers, caperers, and scaramouches. A dancing, or music-master, who can enable the young ladies to display a fine finger or a fine foot, is immediately considered as the best friend of the family, made a companion, invited to the table, paid extravagantly, and complimented with thanks and presents; neither is it wonderful if the young ladies fall in love with these fine gentlemen and marry them; since they appear, both in their own and their parents' eyes, to possess the summit of all human excellence. As to the person who may be employed to form their minds, he is usually engaged from the recommendation of cheapness, and is for the most part, made an object of ridicule, because he has not the agility of a Noverre and Gallini.

An enormous fortune, considered in its true light, is a sacred trust, and intended to promote not only the happiness of its possessor, but of all with whom he is connected, and who deserve his beneficence. The time has been, when the poor were thought to have a claim upon that superfluity which is now lavished on the mean ministers to luxury, vice, and vain ostentation. We read on the tablets in our churches, and in the records of all charitable foundations, that people of the highest fashion were of opinion, that to be good and bountiful was essential to the character of true gentility. But now, if we were to ask the representative of a rich family where he had bestowed the superflui-

ties of the last year, he might answer, that he had deposited some share of it in the pocket of a Frenchman, who had the extraordinary merit, of being able to stand longer on one leg than the rest of the two-legged and unfeathered race. He might answer, that he had lost it at the gaming table; spent it in the tavern and brothel; sported it away at Newmarket; lavished it on dogs, horses, jockeys; and left the poor and the deserving to the care of Providence.

That Providence, whose blessings he abuses and perverts, seldom fails to punish his ingratitude; for as all his external circumstances have more of show than of solidity, so also have all his boasted enjoyments, and all that happiness which he thinks to derive from riches, independently of their proper application. VIRTUE and BENEFICEECE alone, can support the privileged orders with honour and permanency.

No. CXV.

ON A TASTE FOR THE CULTIVATION OF FLOWERS, AND OF BEAUTIFUL SHRUBS AND TREES.

BEAUTY of every kind is formed to allure; and there is this peculiar advantage in contemplating the beauties of vegetable nature, that we may permit our hearts to be captivated by them, without apprehension of any dangerous or dishonourable servitude. A taste for the beauties of vegetation is the mark of a pure and innocent mind, and, at the same time, one of the best preservatives of purity and innocence. It diverts the attention from the turbulent scenes of folly, and superinduces a placid tranquillity highly favourable to the gentler virtues, and to the permanency of our most refined enjoyments.

I have often been surprised to find those who possessed a very acute susceptibility of artificial or literary grace, and were powerfully affected by the beauties of a poem, a piece of sculpture, or a painting, not at

all more sensible of the charms of a tree or a floweret than a common and inelegant spectator. They have dwelt with rapture on a fine description of the Vale of Tempe, they have entered into all the delight which a Shakespeare or a Milton meant to communicate in their enchanting pictures of flowery and sylvan scenes, and yet can walk through a wood, or tread on a bed of violets and primroses, without appearing to be affected with any peculiar pleasure. This is certainly the effect of a superficial judgment; for there is no truth of which philosophers have been longer convinced, than that the realities of nature infinitely surpass the most perfect productions of imitation.

The beauty of colour, though justly esteemed subordinate to that of shape, is yet found to delight the eye more immediately and more universally. When colour and shape are united in the works of nature, he who can view them with insensibility must resign all pretensions to delicacy of perception. Such a union has been usually effected by nature in the formation of a flower.

There is scarcely a single object, in all the vegetable world, in which so many agreeable qualities are combined as in the queen of flowers,—the rose. Nature certainly meant to regale the senses of her favourite with an object which presents to him at once freshness, fragrancy, colour, and shape. The very soul seems to be refreshed on the bare recollection of the pleasure which the senses receive in contemplating, in a fine vernal morning, the charms of the pink, the violet, the honeysuckle, the hyacinth, the narcissus, the jonquil, the rocket, the tulip, and a thousand others, in every variety of figure, scent, and hue. Nature is no less remarkable for the accuracy and beauty of her works, than for variety and profusion. Defects are always discovered in the works of art when they are ex-

amined with a microscope; but a close examination of a leaf of a flower is like taking off a veil from the face of a beauty. The finest needle ever polished, and pointed by the most ingenious artist, appears, when it is viewed by the solar microscope, quite obtuse; while the sting of a bee, however magnified, still retains all its original acuteness of termination. The serrated border in the petal of a flower, and the fringe on the wing of a fly, display an accuracy of delineation which no pencil ever yet could rival. The taste of the florist has not, indeed, been generally aspired to in the circles of fashion; while that of the connoisseur in painting is considered as a mark of elegance of character, and an honourable distinction. Yet surely it is an inconsistency to be transported with the workmanship of a poor mortal, and to feel no raptures in surveying those highly finished pictures, in which it is easy to trace the finger of Omnipotence.

The poets have given us most luxuriant descriptions of gardens and of rural scenery; and, though they are thought by some to have exceeded reality, they have indeed scarcely equalled it. Enter a modern shrubbery formed of a selection of the most agreeable flowering shrubs, and consider, whether there is any thing in the garden of Alcinous, in the fields of Elysium, in Milton's Paradise, to be compared with the intermixture of the lilac, the syringa, the laburnum, the double-blossomed cherry, peach, and almond; with the rubinia, the jessamine, the moss-rose, the magnolia, and a great number of others, less common, but not of greater though perhaps of equal beauty. As we walk under clusters of flowers white as snow, tinged with gold, purple as the grape, blue as the expanse of heaven, and blushing like the cheek of youth, we are led to imagine ourselves in fairy land, or in another

and better world, where every delicate sense is delighted, and all around breathes fragrance and expands beauty, while the heart seems to participate in the joy of laughing nature. Groves and gardens have, indeed, been always supposed to sooth the mind into a placid temper peculiarly favourable to the indulgence of contemplation.

The excellent taste which now prevails in gardening usually combines the shrubbery and the grove. The tall trees of the forest constitute the back-ground in the living landscape, and the shrubs, beneath and before them, form the underwood, in a delightful resemblance to the natural coppice and the uncultivated forest. The plane-tree is one of the first beauties among these which are now most frequently planted in our gardens. Its large leaf and permanent verdure render it peculiarly fitted to afford a shade. I always consider it as a classical tree, for the ancient writers often mention it; and some of the finest philosophical dialogues of antiquity passed under the cool retreat of its broad and vivid foliage. Socrates sought no other theatre than the turf that grew under the plane-tree on the banks of the Ilissus. The weeping-willow that droops over the babbling stream constitutes one of those fine beauties which partake of the melancholy and romantic. Such, indeed, are the charms of its luxuriant branches, that, when properly situated, it is of itself an enchanting image. Beautiful as are all the features of the modern garden, I should not hesitate to allot the first place in an estimate of horticultural graces to the weeping-willow. The pendant birch is at all times pleasing, and a most delightful object in winter. Observe yonder tall stem, rising from the interstices of a craggy rock, covered with a rind white and glossy like silver, and drooping with ten thousand fine twigs, so attenuated as to appear almost capillary.

View it when sprinkled with hoar frost, or with snow, and, if you have a soul capable of being charmed with natural beauty, you will be sensibly affected at the sight with a sweet complacency. An old oak is not often found in our gardens, because of its tardy vegetation; but whenever it appears in them, it produces all the effect of graceful majesty, and one may contemplate it for hours with still new delight. The delicate acacia, the conical poplar of Lombardy, the flowery chesnut, the soft lime, the elegant mountain ash, the aspiring fir, the glossy laurel, these all form so various and delightful pictures, that while I am permitted to expatiate over the lawn, and penetrate the mazes of the wood and garden, I shall not repine that the distance of my rural retreat may prevent me from sauntering in the picture-galleries of a palace. Nature shall be my painter, and yonder hill my picture-gallery.

The taste for plantation prevails greatly in this country, and it ought to be encouraged, as it is a never-failing source of pleasure to the planter, and of improvement to the community. But it is to be hoped, that, while we plant the tree for ornament, we shall not forget to drop the acorn into the bosom of the earth, and raise that heart of oak, which bears an analogy to the bravery of the people, and has ever been to this land both a bulwark and a beauty.

No. CXVI.

ON THE CHARACTER OF ADDISON AS A POET. [IN A LETTER.]

THE lustre of a great name not only sets off real beauties to the greatest advantage, but sometimes adds a grace to deformity, and converts a defect to an excellence. The enthusiastical admirers of a favourite author, like ardent lovers, view those objects with rap-

ture which cause in others indifference or disgust Without considering the inequalities of the same genius at different times, and the diversities of subjects which he treats, they are led to conclude, from the excellence of one part of an author's works, that all are excellent, and that whatever bears his signature is genuine wit and just taste.

I know not whether even Mr. Addison, who is so deservedly esteemed the honour of our nation, was not indebted for a small part of his reputation to the blind bigotry of prejudice. On any other supposition, I know not how he could have been admired as a very eminent poet. The dispassionate temperature which constituted a solid judgment, and qualified him for the cool disquisitions of criticism and morality, rendered him incapable of that animated spirit which is the soul of poetry. But the reader is unwilling to believe that so accurate a critic, and so correct a writer, is himself faulty; and therefore, when he passes from his prose to his poetry, and observes a manifest inferiority and deficiency of merit in the latter, he rather inclines to distrust his own judgment than the abilities of the author. Reader after reader has toiled through the same dull rhymes, perhaps blind to their faults, or, if sensible of their defects, yet inclined to join in their praise, in opposition to conviction, from a dread of the imputation of a depraved taste. Had not a veneration for his name prevented critics from speaking their real sentiments, though Addison would, as a moral essayist, most justly have been called the Socrates, Plato, or Xenophon of his age, yet he would never have been esteemed one of the first of poets. He seldom rises above mediocrity.

It would be injustice, while we inspect the poetical volumes of Addison, to pass over in silence the elegant poem which is prefixed, on the death of their author,

by Tickell. The melancholy flow of the verse is well adapted to express the tenderness of the sentiments. The beauty of its imagery and the force of its expression entitle this little piece to a very respectable rank among the elegiac compositions of the English writers. It was for a long time little regarded; but the attention lately paid to it, and the commendations bestowed on it, are proofs that literary merit, however unnoticed for a time, through accident, prejudice, or party, is sure to receive the applause it deserves from impartial posterity.

At the end of the verses of Addison to Mr. Dryden, we are told that the author was but twenty-two years of age when he wrote them. Whether the age was affixed to extenuate the imperfections, or to enhance the merits of the poem, certain it is, that both these intentions are frustrated by its extreme insignificance and futility. The production is unworthy the age of twenty-two. Mr. Pope is known to have written his pastorals, which infinitely exceed the versification of Addison, at sixteen; and Milton acquired an elegance in Latin verse at an earlier period. The thoughts in this piece are not striking; the style is contemptible; and the negligence in the rhyme alone would, in the present refinement of taste, consign the work to oblivion.

That all his pieces are upon a level with this, cannot be asserted. That some of them abound with grand conceptions, and have many good lines, must be confessed. But, allowing Addison all the merit in his poetry which candour, or even partiality in his favour, can allow, he never can be justly esteemed one of the first poets of the nation. I never heard that Socrates increased his fame by his poetical version of Æsop's Fables, and the best prose-writer in the best age of Rome wrote the line *O fortunatam, natam, me consule,*

Romam. The truth is, nature usually bestows her gifts with a prudent liberality even to her favourites. One might on this occasion apply to Addison the passage of Martial, *Hoc Ciceronis habes.* This character of a bad poet you have in common with the great Cicero.

To oppose opinions universally received, is to incur the imputation of vanity, ignorance, and want of taste. But, as every individual has a right to private judgment, and may offer his sentiments to others, while he does it with modesty, professes a possibility of mistake, and keeps his mind open to conviction, I have ventured to advance an opinion against the poetical merit of Addison; regardless how it may alarm those who submit their judgments to the direction of others, and who pay an implicit obedience to the despotism of critical authority.

END OF VOL. I.

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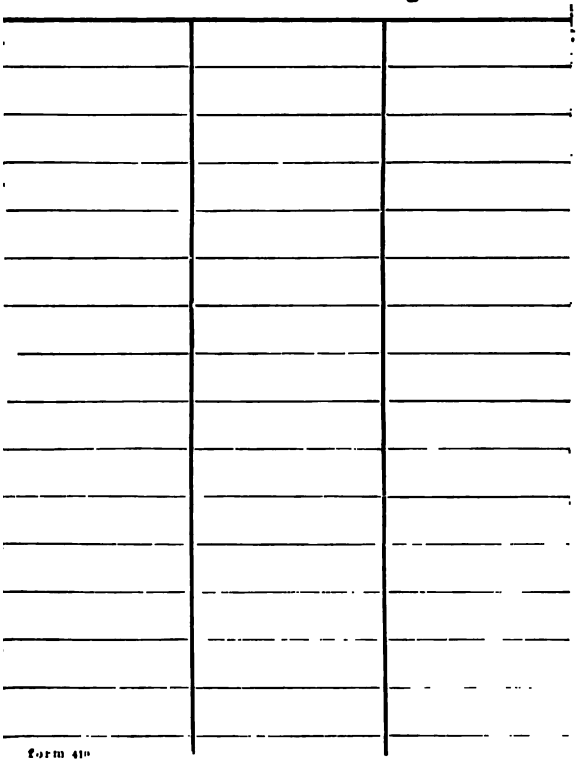

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